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F I F T E E N

S E R M O N S,

P R E A C H E D O N

V A R I O U S I M P O R T A N T

S U B J E C T S,

B Y

G E O R G E W H I T E F I E L D , A . B . K

L A T E O F P E M B R O K E - C O L L E G E , O X F O R D .

C A R E F U L L Y C O R R E C T E D A N D R E V I S E D
A C C O R D I N G T O T H E B E S T L O N D O N E D I T I O N .

T O W H I C H . I S P R E F I X E D ,
A S E R M O N , o n t h e C h a r a c t e r , P r e a c h i n g , & c .
o f t h e R e v . M r . W H I T E F I E L D .

B y J O S E P H S M I T H , V . D . M .

G L A S G O W :
P R I N T E D I N T H E Y E A R
M . D C C . L X X X V .

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THE
CHARACTER, PREACHING, &c.

OF THE REVEREND

MR. GEORGE WHITEFIELD,

impartially represented and supported, in a SERMON, preached in Charlestown, South-Carolina, March 26th, *Anno Domini* 1740, by JOSEPH SMITH, *V. D. M.* With a Preface by the Rev. Dr. COLMAN, and Mr. COOPER of Boston, New-England.

TO THE
R E A D E R.

THE following discourse was inclosed to us by our dear brother, the worthy author of it; and we have read it with high pleasure and satisfaction. The design is sufficiently intimated in the title-page. It is indeed a sermon of an extraordinary nature. To give from the pulpit, the personal and ministerial character of a living preacher is very unusual, or, perhaps altogether new. But so is the occasion—And the discourse must be looked upon, to be apologetical rather than eulogistical. The manifest design is to support the cause by vindicating the man; not a private and party cause: But that of primitive piety, and catholic Christianity; the cause of Christ and truth, if the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, the asserting and clearing whereof was the glory of the Reformation, may be so called? A cause this, in which zeal is certainly a virtue.

As to the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, the person referred to, and named, he is the wonder of the age;

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and no man more employs the pens, and fills up the conversation of people, than he does at this day: None more admired and applauded by some, contemned and reproached by others. The common lot of the most excellent men the world has ever had to shew!

While so many others are speaking and publishing their sentiments concerning him with all freedom, Mr. Smith thought himself not precluded. He hath had as much opportunity as most, to inform himself concerning Mr. Whitefield's doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, charity, long-suffering, patience, persecutions, and afflictions which have come unto him: And what he has seen and heard, that declares he unto us; and we receive his testimony, because we know him to be a gentleman of good sense and strict veracity; and also free from enthusiastic impressions, unless serious religion and experimental piety are so called, as we have melancholy occasion to observe they often are. There appear to us plain marks of sincerity and impartiality in the following account. And the same things have been reported to us by our Reverend Brethren, of the like character, whom we know and correspond with, in places where Mr. Whitefield hath visited and preached in.

And as to his thoughts respecting the views of providence in raising up men of this stamp and spirit in our day, he expresses them with great modesty and caution, and we cannot but apprehend they are countenanced from scripture, reason, and observation.

When God is about to carry on salvation-work with any remarkable success, he will raise up suitable instruments to work by. He will form and spirit men for great and extraordinary undertakings when he has any great and extraordinary purposes to serve.

Thus when God's time for this great and good work of building the second temple was come, Joshua and others were animated to undertake it; and though they were men wondered at, for the warmth of their zeal and the boldness of their enterprise; that in the face of so many opposers and difficulties, they should undertake to rebuild the holy city and the temple; yet they were raised above all discouragements, and stood firm against all opposition, being fortified with a special promise of the Messiah, in whose strength and by whose influence they should be successfully carried on in their work. *Hear now, O Joshua the high-priest; Thou and thy fellows that sit before thee; for they are men wondered at: For I will bring forth my servant the Branch. Behold, the stone that I have laid before Joshua: Upon one stone shall be seven eyes. I will engrave the engraving thereof, saith the Lord of hosts; and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day, Zech. ii. 8, 9.*

So when the gospel-church was to be set up in the world, and the Gentile nations to be converted to the knowledge and faith of Jesus, a dozen poor illiterate fisher-men were endued with power from on high; and sent forth to open mens eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. And in them was fulfilled that which is written, Psalm viii. 2. *Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies; that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.*

And when the church was overspread with Popish darkness, superstition, and idolatry, and the Romish tyranny was at its very height*, it pleased God to enlighten some ecclesiastics gradually in the knowledge of his truth, and then animate and

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* In the 16th century.

assist them to lay open the errors and corruptions of Popery, and boldly to assert and maintain the pure truths of the gospel. Of this number were Zuinglius in Switzerland, and Luther in Germany: Names that will be had in everlasting remembrance in the records of the church.

The resolute opposition that was made against them, and the contempt that was poured upon them, instead of cooling enflamed their courage. The further search they made into the depth of those corruptions that had overspread the church, the more light still broke in upon them. They found its doctrines poisoned with heresy, and its worship corrupted with superstition and idolatry; and Christianity grown very like to Paganism. Under this conviction they loudly called upon all that had any concern for their souls to go out of Babylon, as they would not be partakers of her plagues. And multitudes of people were influenced by their preaching and writings, to renounce the Romish doctrines and superstition; and many of the princes of Europe too were inclined to favour and fall in with the Reformation.

As for Luther in particular, he was a wondrous man, and the almighty power of God was eminently manifested in him. When he first appeared, "What could be expected from a poor fryar, "creeping out of a cloister? He was advised by his "friends to get into his cell again, and to ply his "prayers, and not venture upon so hazardous an "undertaking, as to preach against the Pope, or "attempt so impossible a work as the reformation." But, *not by might, nor power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.*—This single inconsiderable man was more than a match for the powers of Rome, and was instrumental to produce one of the greatest changes the world has ever had to marvel at.

And when it pleases God to renew the face of

religion; when primitive Christianity, and the power of godliness, shall be revived in the reforming churches; when the professors of the gospel shall be recovered from the false principles they have embraced, raised above those dead formalities they have so long rested in, and awakened out of that lethargy they are fallen into; when these expected times of reformation shall come on, is it not reasonable to suppose that God will raise up those to effect it, whom he will furnish with a good measure of the primitive apostolic spirit; whose hearts shall be inflamed with a burning zeal for the honour of the Redeemer, and love to the souls of men; and who shall therefore be willing to deny themselves in these things which are dear to the most; shall not scruple to go out of the common road, to spread the triumphs of the gospel, and fetch in souls to Jesus Christ; and will not be discouraged by any opposition they may meet with? Considering the present state of things in the Christian world, how can we expect any great change for the better, but in a way that shall be extraordinary.

And if there is any appearance of such a work at any time, or in any place, surely we should take care not to slight and undervalue it; much less should we reproach and censure it, or those who are used as instruments in it, so far as it seems to be from heaven, and further it with our prayers, as those who are waiting for the kingdom of God.

We would therefore bespeak the prayers of the faithful in Christ Jesus, into whose hands these papers may come, both for our dear brother and the author of this discourse; who is with great zeal contending for some important points of the faith once delivered unto the saints, against some who openly oppose them, and labouring to promote practical godliness, in the place where divine providence has appointed his present station; that he may

be assisted and succeeded in all his faithful services for the Redeemer's kingdom : and also for the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, that he may (as he has well expressed himself in some of his letters to us) " be kept humble and dependent on our dear Lord " Jesus ; " be preserved in his travels, strengthened to his uncommon labours, and fortified against all opposition : that Satan, (who cannot but have a peculiar enmity at those who so set themselves against his kingdom) may never get advantage of him, to the blemish or hindrance of the great and good work which we hope is begun and going on ; that God would cause him always to triumph in Christ, while he makes manifest the favour of his knowledge by him in every place, and uses him as an instrument to bring back many wandering sheep to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls ; and very particularly that his purposed coming to us, may be with as full a blessing of the gospel of Christ as other places have experienced, and much more abundant by the will and grace of our God !

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Boston, N. E. }
 June 7, 1740. }

BENJAMIN COLMAN.
 WILLIAM COOPER.

*B. G. Allen Howell
 Back Southampton*

The CHARACTER, PREACHING, &c. of
the Rev. Mr. GEORGE WHITEFIELD,
impartially represented and supported.

J O B xxxii. 17.

*I said, I will answer also my part, I also will shew
my opinion.*

MY design from this text, is to shew my impartial opinion of that Son of Thunder, who has lately graced and warmed this desk; and would have been an ornament, I think, to the best pulpit in the province. Happy shall I think myself, if I can only clinch the nails, this great * *master of assemblies* has already fastened.—Like Elihu, the gallant youth before us, *I am now full of matter; the spirit within me constraineth me: My belly is as wine which hath no vent, it is ready to burst like new bottles. I will speak that I may be refreshed.*—Others have freely spoken their sentiments of the wondrous man before me; and I have heard the defaming as well as the applause of many.—*I said therefore, I will answer also my part, I will also shew my opinion.*—In this, I design no offence, nor would I give flattering titles to any man, lest my Maker should take me away.

The scheme proposed is,

- I. To shew my opinion of the *doctrines* he insisted upon, and well established.
- II. To speak something of the *manner* of his preaching.
- III. To offer my sentiments upon his *personal character*.

* That ministers of the gospel are called masters of assemblies.
See Pool's Annotations on Eccl. xii. 11.

Lastly, To give my thoughts, what *providence* seems to have in its view, in raising up men of this *stamp* in our day, almost every where spoken against, yet crouded after and justly admired.

I. I shall give you my opinions of the *doctrines* he insisted upon among us.

To speak more generally; They were doctrines, I am of opinion, agreeable to the dictates of reason; evidently founded upon scripture; exactly correspondent with the articles of the establishment; of great use and necessity in forming the Christian life; which I had early imbibed from the best writers and systems; from which I had never yet seen reason to recede, and which therefore you are witnesses, I have not failed to introduce and inculcate, in the course of my ministry among you.

To be more particular;

One of the doctrines, which he has hardly passed over in silence in any single discourse, is that of *original sin*. A truth so manifest in scripture, that, I am almost of opinion, it is impossible any sincere, diligent and unprejudiced enquirer should miss it: for it is written in sun-beams, that a man may run and read.

By original sin, I mean nothing less than the imputation of Adam's first sin to all his posterity by ordinary generation; which imputation is the resultance of his being constituted to act for them in the extensive capacity of a legal representative; the consequence of which is, that inherent corruption of nature, and those sinful propensions, we are now born with into the world.—As to the point of imputation, it is a doctrine it must be confessed, of more intricacy; about which, it is therefore possible, a well-meaning man may labour under some scruples, while perhaps he allows of the depravity of

human nature. Though I must beg leave to express my surprise, that any person of judgment should maintain this depravity, and not immediately discover its necessary connection with the imputation, and how impossible it is to secure the justice of God, without having recourse to it: for certainly, the corruption of human nature, so universal and inseparable, is one of the greatest punishments that could be inflicted upon the species; and that it is inflicted, appears from hence, that *God made man at first upright*. Now, if there be no previous imputation, to lay a legal foundation for this punishment, then God has inflicted an evident punishment upon a race of men, perfectly innocent, and which had neither sinned personally, nor yet by imputation: and thus, while we imagine we honour the justice of God by renouncing imputation, we in fact pour the highest dishonour upon that sacred attribute.—This, I fear, is the grand reason, why the adversaries of original sin labour so hard to explode the depravity of nature; for should they once admit that, they are conscious, they must admit imputation too. I say, I fear, this is the grand reason.—How else is it possible a man should question a truth, written in capitals upon the moral world? A truth, we feel in every power of our soul! what we read upon our own hearts; and is indeed stamped upon universal nature, within our horizon; and which the more righteous any man is, the more he feels and groans under.—We need not wonder then, our late incomparable preacher should insist upon original sin, when we consider, not only in what an incontestible manner he proved it, but of what vast importance it must be. For to give my opinion freely; I cannot think, I can see, how the Christian scheme can be consistent with itself, or supported with honour, without this basis. I look upon it, not merely as a doctrine of the scriptures,

the great fountain of truth, but a very fundamental one; from which, I hope, God will suffer none of you to be enticed, by any sophistry of the subtle disputers of this world, or charms of language.

But to proceed.—

Another doctrine we have lately had in the warmest language impressed upon us, is that Pauline one of justification by faith alone. And here you will remember, how the preacher vindicated himself from all suspicions of Antinomian error, and opening a door to licentious manners: for while on the one hand, he earnestly contended for our justification as the free gift of God, by faith alone, in the blood of Christ, an article of faith delivered to the saints of old; so on the other hand, he took special care to guard against the licentious abuse of it, and would not *make void the law*, when he asserted that good works were the necessary fruits and evidences of true faith; telling us plainly, and with the clearest distinction, that a man was justified three ways; *meritoriously* by Christ, *instrumentally* by faith alone, *declaratively* by good works. And believe me, my brethren, this is the true gospel of Jesus Christ, and the writings of his apostles. For when Abraham believed God, was not it (his faith) imputed to him for righteousness? And yet, was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar! How shall we then reconcile this? Why very easily. The act of this faith justified him through Christ, and the offering of Isaac justified that faith: the first in the sight of God, the other in the sight of man. In justification faith precedes, works follow after; for if works precede, or had any causal influence into our justification, we might seem to have *whereof to glory before God*. But here, it is the free gift of God, and boasting for ever excluded. God, when he justifies a man, never finds, but makes him ho-

ly; without prevision of merit, of which there can be no shadow in an apostate creature. No; *By grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.* And could I live the most exact life, ever man lived; could I even excel the virtues of the pious preacher himself; could I produce as many good works, as the saints in all ages collected together; I would not for ten thousand worlds put my justification upon them: I would only consider them, as bright and pleasant evidences of the truth of my faith in Christ. Good works are valuable things; God forbid, we should hiss a word against them, in their proper place; we plead for them, we press the practice of them, as incumbent upon all Christians; but we cannot allow them any share in our justification before God. They may prove we are justified; but they cannot justify us. No verily: *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but of his own mercy, God saveth us.*——Hitherto then, our preacher is orthodox in his doctrine, which both excludes licentiousness, establishes the law, and exalts free grace; the evident design and language of the gospel, and which, I am of opinion, every minister of Christ should earnestly contend for: because the sinner must first see himself naked, before he will come to Christ for his white raiment; the pure and fine linen, which is the righteousness of the saints, and which I counsel you all to buy of him.

Regeneration was another great doctrine, which the excellent man much insisted upon; hardly a single sermon, but he mentioned it, sometimes more than twice; and one, and perhaps the best of his discourses, was *ex professo* upon this subject. Nor can any man be surprised, that a minister of the New Testament should so heartily espouse a principle, which our Lord himself began to speak, and asserted as a fundamental point of Christianity,

indispensibly requisite to eternal life; and this with so much vehemency, and earnest repetition. *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again (from above) he cannot see the kingdom of God.* He assures us, *We must be born of water and of the Spirit.* Our regeneration results, in its necessity, from original sin. They that are *shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin*, must be washed and cleansed.—By which is not meant the mere forms and rites of baptism; not the washing away the filth of the flesh, as the corrupt Pharisees might wash their hands, and the outside of the cup; but the answer of a good conscience towards God, purged by the blood of Christ. For we can only be *saved by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the holy Ghost*: the infusion of a new life, a divine, heavenly, and prolific principle. As we are by nature dead in trespasses and sins, God must quicken us by his Spirit, and through that we must *mortify the seeds of the body, and crucify the flesh with its lusts and affections.* For until we know (until we feel the exceeding greatness of) the power of Christ's resurrection, we have no part in him: we cannot enter into heaven; or if we should, our first petition would be, to be discharged as soon as possible. Pleasure is the result of harmony; the nature must agree with the object: there must be a great change upon the nature, to make us susceptible of the pleasures of God's presence.—

Cavillers and scoffers, I know, there are enough, in these last days against this doctrine. Some master of Israel may ask, *How can these things be? Can a man when he is old, enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?*——Who ever said he could? Or what would it avail, if he should? But, I hope, there may be such a thing as a spiritual birth, subsequent to the natural.—May we not be again begotten to a lively hope? May not God

of his own will do it by his word and Spirit? And may we not then become as *little children* and *new born babes*.—Born not of blood, nor of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God? Are we not told, in the most express language,—*that which is born of the flesh, is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit?* Are not here two births, one natural, the other spiritual?—I am really astonished, any man should read his Bible, and his own heart, and be a stranger to this doctrine of the new-birth; without which all our boasted morality, and ethical virtues, however splendid and rhetoricated upon, can never adorn us in the sight of God, nor qualify us for his redeeming love.

True religion is an inward thing, a thing of the heart; it chiefly resides there, and consists in a right disposition and sanctified temper of the will and affections; and as we have been lately told, *in righteousness, peace, and joy in the holy Ghost*. Which naturally introduces another doctrine, nearly allied to this, and which was very strongly insisted on, *viz.*

The impressions or (which was the preacher's own phrase) inward feelings of the Spirit. And here you remember, how he guarded against the invidious censure, of assuming the character of an apostle.

He renounced all pretensions to the extraordinary powers and signs of apostleship, gifts of healing, speaking with tongues, the faith of miracles; things peculiar to the age of inspiration, and extinct with them.—He also allowed these feelings of the Spirit were not in every person, or at all times, in the same degree; and that though a full assurance were attainable, and what every one should labour to attain, yet not of absolute necessity to the being of a Christian.—Only he asserted that we might feel the Spirit of God, in his sanctifying and saving im-

pressions, and witnessing with our own spirits. And what is there in all this repugnant to reason! What is there in it, but what is perfectly agreeable to scripture! How can we be led by the Spirit, or have joy in the holy Ghost, without some sensible perceptions of it!—Can I at any time feel my soul in sacred raptures, burning with the love of God, and of Christ, and all my best passions alive? Can I feel a secret pleasure in the word, ordinances, and communion of God? Can I *taste the powers of the world to come*? Can I feel the threatnings of God impressed upon my conscience, or promises of paradise working upon my hopes! Can I groan under the burden of my corruptions, or exult in the liberty of spirit, I may sometimes have, in a calm and retired hour, in the meditation of my pardon, and the contemplation of heaven and immortality? I say, Can I have all these things in me, and do I feel them upon my soul, and yet this doctrine of feeling the Spirit be burlesqued and ridiculed, in an age of infidelity, and of men who love to speak evil of the things which they *know not*? Indeed a sinful and adulterous generation may seek after a sign. But what sign can we give them of things that must be known by being felt? Or what ideas can I convey of light to the blind, and of harmony to the deaf?—Let God touch their hearts, as he has done ours, and they shall feel, what we feel, and what I would not but feel, for millions of worlds. But till then it is impossible in nature to represent it, in a full adequate light to them; and they may as well ask for mathematical demonstrations in a point of pure morality.—This is a doctrine, I have been acquainted with these many years; it is not new or surprizing to me; you have heard me preach it scores of times, though perhaps, clothed in other expressions, and the influences of the Spirit, the impressions of grace. And

however derided by some, who set up and care for a system of rational religion, I hope to have always enthusiasm enough to maintain that the Spirit of God may be felt.—To conclude this head, All the doctrines, now mentioned, are primitive, Protestant, puritannic ones; which our good fathers, conformists and dissenters, have filled their writings with: And as Dr. Watts has well observed, "They fill heaven apace, for God was with them."

Yet all that vast reverence, with which I heard these doctrines from the mouth of our famous teacher, could not win my applause or approbation of some few harsher epithets and expressions (you know what I mean) which dropt from his lips. These in my opinion, may be pronounced blunders; but such as often attend a warm zeal for orthodoxy, in the points of the last importance; and from a principle of conscience, and are found interwoven with the brightest characters: and he that has none, let him cast the first stone.

II. I shall next give you my opinion of the manner of his preaching.

And here I need not say, nor can my pen describe his action and gesture, in all their strength and decencies. He is certainly a finished preacher, a great master of pulpit-oratory and elocution, while a noble negligence ran thro' his style. Yet his discourses were very extraordinary when we consider how little they were premeditated, and how many of them he gave us, the little time he was with us—Many, I trust, have felt, and will long feel the impressions of his zeal and fire, the passion and flame of his expressions: which were such, that I cannot think my public character of him†, in the least exceed the bounds of truth and strict veracity; only making that allowance for figures of speech, which is always expected, upon extraor-

† South-Carolina Gazette, No. 107.

dinary occasions, and in the portraiture of great characters.

He appeared to me, in all his discourses, very deeply affected and impressed in his own heart. How did that burn and boil within him, when he spake of the things he had made, touching the King! How was his tongue like the pen of a ready writer! touching as with a coal from the altar! With what a flow of words, what a ready profusion of language, did he speak to us upon the great concerns of our souls? In what a flaming light did he set our eternity before us? how earnestly did he press Christ upon us? How did he move our passions with the constraining love of such a Redeemer? The awe, the silence, the attention, which sat upon the face of so great an audience, was an argument, how he could reign over all their powers. Many thought, *He spake as never man spake* before him. So charmed were people with his manner of address, that they shut up their shops, forgot their secular business, and laid aside their schemes for the world; and the oftener he preached, the keener edge he seemed to put upon their desires of hearing him again!—How awfully, with what thunder and sound, did he discharge the artillery of Heaven upon us! And yet, how could he soften and melt even a soldier of Ulysses, with the love and mercy of God! How close, strong and pungent were his applications to the conscience; mingling light and heat, pointing the arrows of the Almighty at the heart of sinners, while he poured in the balm upon the wounds of the contrite, and made broken bones rejoice. Eternal themes, the tremendous solemnities of our religion, were all alive upon his tongue! So much I think (if you will forgive the figure) saint Paul would look and speak in a pulpit, and in some such manner, I have been tempted to conceive of a seraph, were he sent down to preach among us, and

to tell us what things he had seen and heard above!
—How bold and courageous did he look? He was
no flatterer, would not suffer men to settle upon their
fees; did not prophecy smooth things nor sew pil-
lows. *He taught the way of God in truth, and re-
garded not the person of men.* The politest, the
most modish of our vices he struck at, the most fa-
shionable entertainments; regardless of every one's
presence, but his in whose name he spake, with this
authority—He delivered his own soul, very sharp-
ly rebuked our balls and mid-night assemblies, that
name of all that is serious and religious: and I dare
warrant, if none should go to these diversions, till
they have answered the solemn questions he put to
their consciences, our theatre would soon sink and
perish.

You may be sure I was not displeased with this
part of his conduct, when I have so often myself
mentioned these things, as of pernicious tendency
to our morals, religion, and prosperity. And who
can blame a minister's freedom and zeal; what hard-
measures, what cruel treatment would it be to cen-
sure our plainness of speech; when our very com-
mission requires us to lift up our voice like a trum-
pet, to cry aloud, and not spare, to shew people
their transgressions; and when the blood of your
souls, the most insupportable thing in the world,
must be required at our hands, if we be afraid to
warn! I am sure, would people consider this, and
that we cannot possibly propose any temporal ad-
vantage to ourselves, by striking at the right eye,
they would applaud, and not censure, our warmth
and freedom. I must tell you, over and over again,
such things are dangerous to your souls; this can-
not consist with your Christian profession and bap-
tism; they tend to devour the seeds and weaken all
the young springs of virtue, and to erase the most
valuable impressions.

But if the voice of ministers cannot be heard, at least let the circumstances of our country, and the louder roarings of providence, awe and restrain us; for sure I am it is now a time to mourn, and not to dance: and the scripture severely threatens a people, that disregarded the operations of God's hands.

III. I now proceed to shew my opinion of our preacher, in his *personal character* and *behaviour*.

Here I may take courage, and challenge his worst enemies to lay any thing to the charge of his morals; or to arraign his sincerity, so visible in his whole deportment.

While he preaches up faith alone, in our justification before God, yet he is careful to maintain good works, and denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live soberly, righteously, and godly. These things the grace of God teacheth us; and how much of this doctrine has he transcribed into his life? How rich has he been in all good works? What an eminent pattern of piety towards God? How holy and unblameless in all conversation and godliness? How seasoned, how much to the use of edifying, all his discourses? How naturally does he turn them to religion? How much is he given to meditation himself, and how does he labour to excite it in others?

It is indisputable with me that he affects no party in religion, nor sets himself at the head of any. had this been his aim, no man living has had fairer occasions offered; but he abhors the spirit, he endeavours to suppress it. He is always careful to time his Sabbath discourses, so as not to interfere with the stated hours of worship, in that church, of which he is a professed member and minister, and in the opinion of many people a very bright ornament; because, as he told us, he would not tempt away hearers from their proper and respective pastors.

And is not this a noble and generous, a catholic and Christian spirit! He is not bigotted to the modalities and lesser rites and forms of religion, while zealous enough and very warm and jealous in all its essentials, especially in the divine honours and Godhead of his Saviour. He professes love to good men of every denomination, and told us, that the *kingdom of heaven consists not of meats and drinks*. He appears to me a man full of the holy Ghost and of faith. Though his prayers, in this pulpit, were all extempore, yet how copious, how ardent, with what compass of thought? The spirit of grace and supplication seemed to be poured out upon him in plenty, and to kindle and animate his devotions. He prays in public, with that spirit, variety, and agency, which could only be expected from a man, who was no stranger to the sacred duty in private. He lives much by faith, and above the world: desires preferments and riches; of which last, I am told, he has had great offers in Europe—His heart seems set upon doing good. He goes about his great Master's work with diligence and application; and with such chearfulness, as would make one in love with a life of religion, which has so many inward springs of the best comforts, and is not that gloomy, melancholy thing, which prejudice and imagination make it. He is proof against reproach and invective. When he is reviled, revileth not again, but prays heartily for all his enemies, and that such as oppose the truth, may be converted to it. He professes himself to lay down his life for Christ, and to spend and be spent in the service of souls.—Such a man has all imaginable claim to our highest love and honour. I freely own he has taken my heart, and I feel his reproaches.—God seems to be with him of a truth; has set his seal upon him: his rod has budded, and he has many to whom he can say, *Ye are my epistle*. Wherever he has

preached he has been thronged, and many have come to him pricked in their hearts, saying, *What shall we do to be saved!* He has put a new face upon religion, my letters inform me, in some populous cities and parts of our neighbouring continent; given new life to ministers and people; made sermons, once a drug, a vendible commodity among them; evening and weekly lectures are set up, and always crowded with persons of different persuasions; while he has put a damp upon their polite diversions, which always dwindle as Christianity revives. Surely, no man could do these things, I had almost said, these miracles, unless God were with him, who gives the increase, *even when Paul plants, and Apollos waters.* Had ecclesiastic preferments been his idol, fame and reputation his motive, as he has taken a preposterous way to acquire them, so I can never suffer myself to think, God would have owned him so visibly, or given him so many seals of his ministry. Our Saviour himself makes good fruits the general characteristic of good ministers. *Ye shall know them by their fruits.* Either the fruits and success of their ministry, the design and tendency of their doctrines, or the fruits of the Spirit in their lives. And which of these have been wanting in this extraordinary man? Who can object against the tendency of his doctrines? And for success, his enemies know it to their own confusion. And who can say his life is unfruitful, or that he has appeared like an immoral man? He renders to all their due. While zealous for the things of God, he is a friend to Cæsar; a loyal subject to King George, heartily prays for him and his royal house; "*May it abide before God!*" A prayer, to which, I doubt not, you are all ready to say, *Amen.*

But to proceed with our character of the preacher, whom hath he wronged or defrauded? *Whose or whose loss hath he taken?* Say, if any man

hath found ought in his hands; so far from it, that he seems to live, not by bread alone, but by the word and promise of God; without taking thought for the morrow, *what he shall eat, or drink, or put on.*

And for charity, as it consists in compassion and acts of beneficence, we have few men like-minded. In this grand circle of practical religion, he seems to be a second Job, as well as for patience; and deserves a good report of all men, and of the truth itself. Had he been under any criminal influence of a mercenary, covetous temper, had he collected monies for himself, in his journeying often, and itinerant preachings, under the pretext of doing it for the poor, as he was slanderously reported, he had certainly a fair opportunity to enrich himself. But we have seen a plain fact cannot be denied, that he cast all into the treasury, and serves the table of the poor with it.—Strolling and vagabond orphans, poor and helpless, without father, without mother, without purse, and without friend, he seeks out, picks up, and adopts into his family: he is now building accommodations, and laying the best foundation for their support and religious instruction, without any visible fund; encouraged to go on in faith, from the shining example of the great professor in Germany, who began a like pious work with almost nothing, and raised it to such perfection, as is the wonder and astonishment of all that hear it. This is a sacrifice well-pleasing to God! The loins of the poor will bless him, *the blessing of him that was ready to perish, will come upon him!*—He hath dispersed abroad, he hath given to the poor, his righteousness ought to endure, and be celebrated among us. After this, let none call him an uncharitable man: for what brighter evidence of pure religion than this, to visit the fatherless in their affliction:

And permit me here, to join in my thanks to you, and the other charitably disposed Christians, who have shewn their bowels of mercy in the late very large collection * for the orphan-house in Georgia. This is an honour to our whole town. And, believe me, you will never be a penny the poorer, for helping the poor; *Them we have always with us, and insomuch as we have done it unto them, we have done it unto Christ*, and cannot fail of a reward; at least the reflection we make upon it, in our last bed, will give us more satisfaction, than what we contribute to the support of balls and assemblies of music, to the pride and luxuries of life; nor can it fail to occasion many thanksgivings unto God.

I now proceed, under the last head, to give my opinion, what views providence may have in raising up men of this stamp, now among us.

And this I desire to do with all humility and modesty.

I pretend to no spirit of prophecy, and can only conjecture, and offer the result of observation, reason, and the usual tendencies of things, corroborated by the great promises, scattered up and down in our Bibles, wherein *glorious things are spoken of thee, thou city of our God!* The prophecies are usually too dark and mystic to be fully understood. the seals of that book are seldom broken, until the several periods of accomplishment, which makes time the best and surest expositor. But certainly, if we can discern the face of the sky in the morning, we might make some humble and faint conjectures at the times and seasons, which the Father keeps in his own power. Now we are none of us ignorant, how far the primitive spirit of Christianity has sunk into a mere form of godliness. Irreligion has been rushing in, even upon the Protestant world like a

flood: the dearest and most obvious doctrines of the Bible have fallen into low contempt; the principles and systems of our good and pious fathers have been more and more exploded. And now, behold! God seems to have revived the ancient spirit and doctrines. He is raising up our young men, with zeal and courage to stem the torrent. They have been in *labour more abundant*; they have preached with such fire, assiduity, and success; such a solemn awe have they struck upon their hearers; so unaccountably have they conquered the prejudices of many persons; such deep convictions have their sermons produced; so much have they roused and kindled the zeal of ministers and people; so intrepidly do they push through all opposition, that my soul overflows with joy, and my heart is too full to express my hopes. It looks as if some happy period were opening, to bless the world with another reformation. Some great things seem to be upon the anvil, some big prophecy at the birth; God give it strength to bring forth! May he especially water the good seed his servant has plentifully sown among us; may we remember how we have heard, and hold fast; may we cherish conviction; be fixed and rooted in our Christian faith; not rebel against the light, nor make shipwreck at last, by the various winds of doctrine which are blowing upon us!

Thus have I answered for my part, and shown my opinion: I have done it in the integrity of my heart; I have designed no offence; only supported the doctrines and character of a preacher, which love and duty constrain me to honour and defend: while I preclude no man from shewing his opinion, who shall do it with the same impartiality.

Benjⁿ & Ann Howell
Book
Southampton

Feb^y 11- 1813
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T H E

P R E F A C E.

THE following SERMONS, I think I may say were given me by the Lord Jesus Christ; and according to my present light, are agreeable to the form of sound words delivered to us in the lively oracles of God. They contain the sum and substance, I will not say word for word, of what was delivered from the pulpit; for, as I had no occasion in America, Scotland, and England, to preach upon the same subjects, I was obliged, according to the freedom and assistance given me from above, to enlarge, or make excursions, agreeable to the people's circumstances amongst whom I was preaching the kingdom of God, I had no leisure or freedom to commit any of them to writing, but during my last voyage from America to England; nor do I expect to find leisure to write down any fresh discourses, till it shall please God that I embark again. May the Spirit of God, who delights out of the mouths of babes and sucklings to perfect praise, bless them to every reader, and put it into their hearts to pray for their poor unworthy servant in Jesus Christ,

GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

S E R M O N I.

The LORD our Righteousness.

JEREMIAH xxiii. 6,

The Lord our Righteousness.

WHOEVER is acquainted with the nature of mankind in general, or the propensity of his own heart in particular, must acknowledge, that self-righteousness is the last idol that is rooted out of the heart.—Being once born under a covenant of works, it is natural for us all to have recourse to a covenant of works for our everlasting salvation. And we have contracted such a devilish pride by our fall from God, that we would, if not wholly, yet in part at least, glory in being the cause of our own salvation. We cry out against Popery, and that very justly; but we are all Papists, at least I am sure we are all Arminians by nature; and therefore, no wonder so many natural men embrace that scheme. It is true, we disclaim the doctrine of merit, are ashamed directly to say we deserve any good at the hands of God; therefore as the apostle excellently well observes, we go about, we fetch a circuit, to establish a righteousness of our own, and, like the Pharisees of old, will not wholly submit to that righteousness, which is of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This is the forest, though alas! the most common evil that was ever yet seen under the sun. An evil, that in any age, especially in these dregs of time wherein we live, cannot sufficiently be in-

veighed against.—For as it is with the people, so it is with the priests; and it is to be feared, even in those places where once the truth, as it is in Jesus, was eminently preached, many ministers are so sadly degenerated from their pious ancestors, that the doctrines of grace, especially the personal, all-sufficient righteousness of Jesus, is but too seldom, too slightly mentioned. Hence the love of many waxeth cold; and I have often thought, was it possible, that this single consideration would be sufficient to raise our venerable forefathers again from their graves; who would thunder in their ears their fatal error.

The righteousness of Jesus Christ is one of those great mysteries which the angels desire to *look into*, and seems to be one of the first lessons that God taught men after the fall. For what were the coats that God made to put on our first parents, but types of the application of the merits or righteousness of Jesus Christ to believers hearts? We are told, that those coats were made of skins of beasts, and as beasts were not then food for men, we may fairly infer, that those beasts were slain in sacrifice, in commemoration of the great sacrifice Jesus Christ thereafter to be offered. And the skins of those beasts thus slain, being put on Adam and Eve, they were thereby taught how their nakedness was to be covered with the righteousness of the Lamb of God.

This is it which is meant, when we are told Abraham believed on the Lord, and it was counted to him for righteousness. In short, this is it of which both the law and all the prophets have spoken, especially Jeremiah in the words of the text

—*The Lord our righteousness.*—

I propose through divine grace,

I. To consider who we are to understand by the word *Lord*.

II. How the *Lord* is *man's* righteousness.

III. I will consider some of the *chief objections* that are generally urged against *this doctrine*.

IV. I shall shew some very *ill consequences* that flow naturally from *denying* this doctrine.

V. Shall conclude with an exhortation to *all* to come to Christ by *faith*, that they may be enabled to say with the prophet in the text, *The Lord our righteousness*.

I. I am to consider who we are to understand by the word *Lord*—*The Lord our righteousness*.

And if any Arians or Socinians are drawn by curiosity to hear what the babler has to say, let them be ashamed of denying the divinity of that Lord that has bought poor sinners with his precious blood.—For the person mentioned in the text under the character of *Lord* is Jesus Christ.—Behold, ver. 5. *the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, a King shall reign and prosper, shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.*—In his days, ver. 6. *Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely, and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our righteousness.*—By the *righteous Branch*, all agree that we are to understand Jesus Christ.—He it is that is called the Lord in our text. If so, if there were no other text in the Bible to prove the divinity of Christ, that is sufficient. For if the word *Lord* may properly belong to Jesus Christ, he must be God. For as you have it in the margins of your Bibles, the word *Lord* is in the original *Jehovah*, which is the essential title of God himself. Come then, ye Arians, kiss the Son of God, bow down before him, and honour him, even as you honour the Father. Learn of the angels, those morning-stars, and worship him as truly God.—For otherwise you are as much idolaters, as those that worship the Virgin Mary. And as for you Socinians,

who say Christ was a mere man, and yet profess that he was your Saviour, according to your own principles you are accursed. For, if Christ be a mere man, then he is only an arm of flesh.——And it is written, *Cursed is he that trusteth on an arm of flesh.*——But I would hope there are no such monsters here. At least, that after these considerations, they would be ashamed of broaching such monstrous absurdities any more.——For it is plain, that by the word Lord, we are to understand the Lord Jesus Christ, who here takes to himself the title of *Jehovah*, and therefore must be very God of very God, or, as the apostle devoutly expresses it, *God blessed for ever more.*

II. How the Lord is to be *man's righteousness* comes next to be considered.

And that is, in one word, by *imputation.*——For it pleased God, after he had made all things *by the word of his power*, to create man after his own image. And so infinite was the condescension of the high and lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity, that although he might have insisted on the everlasting obedience of him and his posterity, yet he was pleased to oblige himself, by a covenant or agreement made with his own creatures, upon condition of an unfinning obedience, to give them immortality and eternal life.——For when it is said, *the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*, we may fairly infer, so long as he continued obedient, and did not eat thereof, he should surely live.——The 3d of Genesis gives us a full, but mournful account, how our first parents broke this covenant, and thereby stood in need of a better righteousness than their own, in order to procure their future acceptance with God.——For what must they do? They were as much under a covenant of works, as ever. And, though after their disobedience they were without strength, yet they were obliged not

only to do, but continue to do all things, and that too in the most perfect manner which the Lord had required of them.—And not only so, but to make satisfaction to God's infinitely offended justice, for the breach they had already been guilty of.—— Here then opens the amazing scene of divine philanthropy—I mean, God's love to man—For behold, what man could not do, Jesus Christ, the Son of his Father's love, undertakes to do for him. And that God might be just in justifying the ungodly, though he was in the form of God, and therefore thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet he took upon him the form of a servant, even human nature.——In that nature he obeyed, and thereby fulfilled the whole moral law in our stead.——And also died a painful death upon the cross, and thereby became a curse for, or instead of, those whom the Father had given him. As God, he satisfied at the same time that he obeyed, and suffered as man; and being God and man, in one person, wrought out a full, perfect, and sufficient righteousness for all to whom it was to be imputed.

Here then we see the meaning of the word *righteousness*. It implies the active, as well as passive obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ. We generally, when talking of the merits of Christ, only mention the latter, *viz.*—his death; whereas the former, *viz.* his life and active obedience is equally necessary. Christ is not such a Saviour as becomes us, unless we join both together.—Christ not only died, but lived; not only suffered, but obeyed, for or instead of poor sinners. And both these jointly make up that compleat righteousness which is to be imputed to us, as the disobedience of our first parents was made ours by *imputation*. In this sense, and no other, are we to understand that parallel which St. Paul draws in the 5th of the Romans, between the first and second Adam. This is what

he elſewhere terms our *being made the righteouſneſs of God in him*. This is the ſenſe wherein the prophet would have us to underſtand the words of the text; therefore Jer. xxxiii. ver. 16. *She, i. e. the church itſelf ſhall be called (having this righteouſneſs imputed to her) the Lord our righteouſneſs.*—A paſſage, I think, worthy of the profoundeſt meditation of all the ſons and daughters of Abraham.

Many are the objections which the proud hearts of fallen men are continually urging againſt this wholeſome, this divine, this ſoul-ſaving doctrine. I come now, in the third place, to answer ſome few of thoſe which I think the moſt conſiderable.

And firſt, they ſay, becauſe they would appear friends to morality, “That the doctrine of an imputed righteouſneſs is deſtructive of good works, “and leads to licentiouſneſs.”

And who pray are the perſons, that generally urge this objection? Are they men full of faith, and men really concerned for good works? No, whatever few exceptions there may be, if there be any at all, it is notorious, they are generally men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. The beſt title I can give them is, that of profane moralists, or moralists falſely ſo called. For I appeal to the experience of the preſent, as well as paſt ages, if iniquity did and does not moſt abound where the doctrine of Chriſt’s whole perſonal righteouſneſs is moſt cried down, and moſt ſeldom mentioned,—Arminian being antichriſtian principles, always did, and always will lead to antichriſtian practices. And never was there a reformation brought about in the church, but by the preaching the doctrine of an imputed righteouſneſs.—This, as that man of God, Luther calls it, is *Articulus ſtantis aut cadentis Eccleſiæ*, the article by which the church ſtands or falls.—And though the preachers of this doctrine are generally branded by thoſe on the o-

ther side with the opprobrious names of Antinomians, deceivers, and what not; yet, I believe, if the truth of the doctrine on both sides was to be judged of by the lives of the preachers and professors of it, those on our side the question would have the advantage every way.

It is true, this, as well as every other doctrine of grace, may be abused. And perhaps the unchristian walk of some, who have talked of Christ's imputed righteousness, justification by faith, and the like, and yet never felt it imputed to their own souls, has given the enemies of the Lord thus cause to blaspheme. But this is a very unsafe, as well as very unfair way of arguing.—The only question should be, Whether or not this doctrine of an imputed righteousness does in itself cut off the occasion of good works, or lead to licentiousness? No, in no wise. It excludes works indeed from being any cause of our justification in the sight of God.—But it requires good works as a proof of our having this righteousness imputed to us, and as a declarative evidence of our justification in the sight of men. And then how can the doctrine of an imputed righteousness be a doctrine leading to licentiousness?

It is all calumny.—St. Paul introduces an infidel making this objection in his epistle to the Romans—And none but infidels, that never felt the power of Christ's resurrection upon their souls, will urge it over again.—And therefore, notwithstanding this objection, with the prophet in the text, we may boldly say, *The Lord is our righteousness.*

But Satan, (and no wonder that his servants imitate him) often *transforms himself into an angel of light.* And therefore (such perverse things will infidelity and Arminianism make men speak) in order to dress their objections in the best colours, some urge, “that our Saviour preached no such

“doctrine—that in his sermon upon the mount, “he mentions only morality;” and consequently the doctrine of an imputed righteousness falls wholly to the ground.

But surely the men, who urge this objection, either never read, or never understood our Lord’s blessed discourse, wherein the doctrine of an imputed righteousness is so plainly taught, that he that runs, if he has eyes that see, may read.

Indeed our Lord does recommend morality and good works (as all faithful ministers will do) and clears the moral law from the many corrupt glosses put upon it by the letter-learned Pharisees.—But then, before he comes to this, it is remarkable, he talks of inward piety, such as poverty of spirit, meekness, holy mourning, purity of heart,—especially hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and then recommends good works, as an evidence of our having his righteousness imputed to us, and these graces and divine tempers wrought in our hearts.—“Let your light, (that is, the divine light “I before have been mentioning) shine before men, “in a holy life, that they seeing your good works, “may glorify your Father which is in heaven.”—And then immediately adds, “Think not that I “am come to destroy the *moral law*—I came not “to destroy, to take away the force of it as a rule “of life, but to fulfil, to obey it in its whole latitude, and give the compleat sense of it.”—And then he goes on to shew, how exceeding broad the moral law is. So that our Lord, instead of disannulling of an imputed righteousness in his sermon upon the mount, not only confirms it, but also answers the foregoing objection urged against it, by making good works a proof and evidence of its being imputed to our souls.—He therefore that has ears to hear, let him hear what the prophet says in the words of the text—*The Lord our righteousness.*

But as Satan not only quoted scripture, but also backed one temptation with it after another, when he attacked Christ's person in the wilderness; so his children generally take the same method in treating his doctrine. And therefore they urge another objection against the doctrine of an imputed righteousness from the example of the young man in the gospel.

We may state it thus:—"The evangelist. St. Mark, say they, chap. x. mentions a young man "that came to Christ, running and asking him what "he should do to inherit eternal life? Christ, say "they, referred him to the commandments, to "know what he must do to inherit eternal life. It "is plain therefore, works were to be partly, at "least, the cause of his justification; and consequently the doctrine of an imputed righteousness "is unscriptural."—This is the objection in its full strength; and little strength in all its fulness.—— For, was I to prove the necessity of an imputed righteousness, I scarce know how I could bring a better instance to make it good.

Let us take a more intimate view of this young man, and our Lord's behaviour towards him, Mark x. 17. the evangelist tells us, "That when Christ "was gone forth into the way, there came one "running (it should seem it was some nobleman, "a rarity indeed, to see such a one running to "Christ!) and not only so, but he kneeled to him " (tho' perhaps many of his rank now scarce knew "the time when they kneeled to Christ) and *asked* "him, saying, *Good Master, what shall I do that* " *I may inherit eternal life?*—Then Jesus, to see whether or not he believed him to be what he really was, truly and properly God, said unto him, *Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God.*—And that he might directly answer his question; says he, *Thou knowest the command-*

ments: *Do not commit adultery, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.* This, I say, was a direct answer to his question; namely, that eternal life was not to be attained by his doings.—For our Lord, by referring him to the commandments, did not (as the objectors insinuate) in the least hint, that his morality would recommend him to the favour and mercy of God.—But he intended thereby to make the law his schoolmaster to bring him to himself; that the young man, seeing how he had broken every one of these commandments, might thereby be convinced of the insufficiency of his own, and consequently of the absolute necessity of looking out for a better righteousness, whereon he might depend for eternal life.

This was what our Lord designed.—The young man being self-righteous, and willing to justify himself, said, *All these have I observed from my youth.* But had he known himself, he would have confessed, *All these have I broken from my youth.*—For supposing he had not actually committed adultery, had he never lusted after a woman in his heart? What, if he had not really killed another; had he never been angry without a cause, or spoken unadvisedly with his lips? If so, by breaking one of the least commandments in the least degree, he became liable to the curse of God: For *curst is he (saith the law) that continueth not to do all things that are written in this book.*—And therefore, as I observed before, our Lord was so far from speaking against, that he treated the young man in that manner, on purpose to convince him of the necessity of an imputed righteousness.

But perhaps they will reply, it is said, *Jesus beholding him, loved him.* And what then? This he might do with a human love, and at the same time this young man have no interest in his blood.—

Thus Christ is said to wonder—to weep over Jerusalem, and say—*Oh that thou hadst KNOWN, &c.* But such like passages are to be referred only to his human nature. And there is a great deal of difference between the love wherewith Christ loved this young man, and that wherewith he loved Mary, Lazarus, and their sister Martha.—To illustrate this by a comparison.—A minister of the Lord Jesus Christ, seeing many amiable dispositions, such as a readiness to hear the word, a decent behaviour at public worship, a life outwardly spotless in manner, cannot but so far love them. But then there is much difference betwixt that love which a minister feels for such, and that divine love, that union and sympathy of soul, which he feels for those that he is satisfied are really born again of God.—Apply this to our Lord's case, as a faint illustration of it—Consider what has been said upon the young man's case in general, and then, if before you were fond of this objection, instead of triumphing like him, you will go sorrowful away.—Our Saviour's reply to him more and more convinces us of the truth of the prophet's assertion in the text, *viz. that the Lord is our righteousness.*

But there is a fourth and grand objection yet behind, and that is taken from the 25th chapter of St. Matthew, “where our Lord is described, as rewarding people with eternal life, because they fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and such like. — Their works therefore were a cause of their justification; consequently, the doctrine of imputed righteousness is not agreeable to scripture.”

This, I confess, is the most plausible objection that is brought against the doctrine insisted on from the text. And in order that we may answer it in as clear and brief a manner as may be, we confess, with the article of the church of England, “that albeit good works do not justify us, yet they will

“ follow after justification, as fruits of it; and tho’
 “ they can claim no reward in themselves, yet for-
 “ asmuch as they spring from faith in Christ, and
 “ a renewed soul, they shall receive a reward of
 “ grace, though not of debt; and consequently, the
 “ more we abound in such good works, the greater
 “ will be our reward when Jesus Christ shall come
 “ to judgment.”

Take these considerations along with us, and they will help us much to answer the objection now before us.—For thus St. Matthew—*Then shall the King say to them on his right-hand, Come, ye blessed children of my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*—*For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat. I was thirsty, and gave ye me drink. I was a stranger, and ye took me in. Naked, and ye clothed me. I was sick, and ye visited me. I was in prison, and ye came unto me.* “ I will therefore reward you, because you have done these things out of love to me, and hereby have evidenced yourselves to be my true disciples.”——And that the people did not depend on these good actions for their justification in the sight of God is evident. *For when saw we thee an hungred, say they, and fed thee? Or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? Or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?*——Language and questions quite improper for persons relying on their own righteousness for acceptance and acquittance in the sight of God.

But then they reply against this.—In the latter part of the chapter, say they, it is plain that Jesus Christ rejects and damns the others for not doing these things. And therefore, if he damns those for not doing, he saves those for doing; and conse-

quently the doctrine of an imputed righteousness is good for nothing.

But that is no consequence at all—For God may justly damn any man for omitting the least duty of the moral law, and yet in himself is not obliged to give any one any reward, supposing he has done all that he can. We are unprofitable servants, we have done not near so much as it was our duty to do, must be the language of the most holy souls living; and therefore from, or in ourselves, cannot be justified in the sight of God.—This was the frame of the devout souls just now referred to—Sensible of this, they were, so far from depending on their works for justification in the sight of God, that they were filled, as it were, with a holy blushing, to think our Lord should condescend to mention, much more to reward them for their poor works of faith and labours of love. I am persuaded their hearts would rise with a holy indignation against those, who urge this passage as an objection against the assertion of the prophet in the words of the text, that the *Lord is our Righteousness*.

Thus I think we have fairly answered these grand objections, which are generally urged against the doctrine of an imputed righteousness.—Was I to stop here, I think I might say, we are made more than conquerors, through him that loved us—But there is a way of arguing which I have always admired, because I have thought always very convincing, *viz.* by shewing the absurdities that will follow from denying any particular proposition in dispute.

IV. This is the next thing that was proposed.
“And never did greater or more absurdities flow
“from the denying any doctrine, than will flow
“from denying the doctrine of Christ’s imputed
“righteousness.”

And first, if we deny this doctrine, we turn the

truth, I mean the word of God, as much as we can into a lie, and utterly subvert all those places of scripture, which say, *That we are saved by grace; that it is not of works, lest any man should boast.*—That salvation is God's free gift—and that, *He that glorieth, must glory only in the Lord.* For, if the whole personal righteousness of Jesus Christ be not the sole cause of my acceptance with God, if any work done by or foreseen in me, was in the least to be joined with it, or looked upon by God as an inducing, impulsive cause of acquitting my soul from guilt, then I have somewhat whereof I may glory in myself. Now boasting is excluded in the great work of our redemption. But that cannot be, if we are enemies to the doctrine of an imputed righteousness.—It would be endless to enumerate how many texts of scripture must be false, if this doctrine be not true. Let it suffice to affirm in the general, that if we deny an imputed righteousness, we may as well deny a divine revelation all at once.—For it is the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end of the book of God.—We must either disbelieve that, or believe what the prophet hath spoken in the text, *That the Lord is our righteousness.*

But farther.—I observed at the beginning of this discourse, that we are all Arminians and Papists by nature;—for, as one observes, Arminianism is the back way to Popery. And here I venture further to affirm, “That if we deny the doctrine of an imputed righteousness, whatever we may style ourselves, we are really Papists in our hearts, and deserve no other title from men.”

Sirs, What think you?—Suppose I was to come and tell you, that you must intercede with saints, for them to intercede with God for you,—would you not then say, I was justly reputed a Popish missionary by some, and deservedly thrust out of the synagogues by others?—I suppose you would. And

why? Because you would say, the intercession of Jesus Christ was sufficient of itself, without the intercession of saints; and that it was blasphemous to join theirs with his, as though it was not sufficient.

Suppose I went a little more round about, and told you, that the death of Christ was not sufficient, without our death being added to it; that you must die as well as Christ, join your death with his, and then it would be sufficient.—Might you not then, with a holy indignation, throw dust in the air, and justly call me a setter forth of strange doctrines? And now then, if it be not only absurd, but blasphemous, to join the intercession of saints with the intercession of Christ, as though his intercession was not sufficient, or our death with the death of Christ, as though his death was not sufficient; judge ye, if it be not equally absurd, equally blasphemous, to join our obedience, either wholly or in part with the obedience of Christ, as if that was not sufficient. And if so, what absurdities will follow the denying that the Lord, both as to his active and passive obedience, is our righteousness?

One more absurdity I shall mention, that will follow from the denying this doctrine, and I have done.

I remember a story of a certain prelate, who, after many arguments in vain urged to convince the Earl of Rochester of the invisible realities of another world, took his leave of his lordship with some such words as these;—"Well, my lord, says he, "if there be no hell, I am safe;—but, if there "should be such a thing, my lord, as hell, what "will become of you?" I apply this to those that oppose the doctrine now insisted on. If there be no such thing as the doctrine of an imputed righteousness, those that hold it, and bring forth fruit up to holiness, are safe. But if there be such a thing, (as there certainly is) what will become of you that

deny it? It is no difficult matter to determine.—Your portion must be in the lake of fire and brimstone for ever and ever; since you will rely upon your works, by your works you shall be judged.—They shall be weighed in the balance of the sanctuary.—They will be found wanting.—By your works therefore shall you be condemned; and you, being out of Christ, shall find God to your poor wretched souls a consuming fire.

The great Stoddard of Northampton in New England, has therefore well entitled a book which he wrote (and which I would take this opportunity to recommend) “The safety of appearing in the “righteousness of Christ.”—For why should I lean upon a broken reed, when I can have the rock of ages to stand upon, that never can be moved?

And now before I come to a more particular application, give me leave, in the apostle’s language, triumphantly to cry out, Where is the scribe? where the disputer? where is the reasoning infidel of this generation? Can any thing appear more reasonable, even according to your own way of arguing, than the doctrine here laid down? Have you not felt a convincing power go along with the word? Why then will you not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, that so he may become the Lord your righteousness.

But it is time for me to come a little closer to your consciences.

Brethren, though some may be offended at this doctrine, and may account it foolishness; yet to many of you, I doubt not but it is precious, it being agreeable to the form of sound words, which from your infancy has been delivered to you: and coming from a quarter, you would least have expected, may be received with more pleasure and satisfaction. But give me leave to ask you one question, Can you say, the Lord our righteousness?—

I say, the Lord our righteousness. For entertaining this doctrine in your heads, without receiving the Lord Jesus Christ savingly by a lively faith into your hearts, will but increase your damnation. ---As I have often told you, so I tell you again, an unapplied Christ, is no Christ at all.---Can you then, with believing Thomas, cry out, *My Lord, and my God!* Is Christ your sanctification, as well as your outward righteousness? For the word righteousness in the text, not only implies Christ's personal righteousness imputed to us, but also holiness of heart wrought in us.---These two God hath joined together.---He never did, He never does, He never will put them asunder.---If you are justified by the BLOOD, you are also sanctified by the Spirit of the Lord. Can you then in this sense say, the Lord our righteousness? Were you ever made to abhor yourselves for your actual and original sins, and to loath your own righteousness, (or, as the prophet beautifully expresses it, your righteousnesses) as filthy rags? Were you ever made to see and admire the all-sufficiency of Christ's righteousness, and excited by the spirit of God to hunger and thirst after it? Could you ever say, my soul is athirst for Christ, yea, even for the righteousness of Christ? Oh, when shall I come to appear before the presence of my God in the righteousness of Christ! Oh, nothing but Christ! nothing but Christ! Give me Christ, O God, and I am satisfied! My soul shall praise thee for ever. Was this, I say, ever the language of your hearts?---And after these inward conflicts, were you ever enabled to reach out the arm of faith, and embrace the blessed Jesus in your souls, so that you could say, *My beloved is mine, and I am his?* If so, fear not, whoever you are. Hail, all hail, you happy souls! The Lord, the Lord Christ, the everlasting God is your righteousness.---Christ has justified you, who

is he that condemneth you? Christ has died for you, may rather is risen again, and ever liveth to make intercession for you.——Being now justified by his grace, you have peace with God, and shall ere long be with Jesus in glory, reaping everlasting and unspeakable redemption both in body and soul.——For there is no condemnation to those that are really in Christ Jesus. Whether Paul or Apollos, or life or death, all is yours, if you are Christ's, for Christ is God's!——Oh, my brethren, my heart is enlarged towards you!——Oh, think of the love of Christ in dying for you!——If the Lord be your righteousness, let the righteousness of your Lord be continually in your mouth. Talk of, oh talk of and recommend the righteousness of Christ, when you lie down, and when you rise up, at your going out, and at your coming in!——Think of the greatness of the gift, as well as of the giver!——Shew to all the world in whom you have believed! Let all by your fruits know, that the Lord is your righteousness, and that you are waiting for your Lord from heaven!——Oh study to be holy, even as he who has called you, and washed you in his own blood, is holy!——Let not the righteousness of the Lord be evil spoken of through you.——Let not Jesus be wounded in the house of his friends; but grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ day by day.——Oh, think of his dying love! Let that love constrain you to obedience! Having much forgiven, love much. Be always asking, what shall I do to express my gratitude to the Lord, for giving me his righteousness? Let that self-abasing, God-exalting question be always in your mouths. Oh be always lisping out, Why me, Lord! Why me? Why am I taken, and others left? Why is the Lord my righteousness? Why is he become my salvation, who have so often deserved damnation at his hands

Oh, my friends, I trust I feel somewhat of a sense of God's distinguishing love upon my heart! therefore I must divert a little from congratulating you, to invite poor christless sinners to come to him, and accept of his righteousness, that they may have life.

Alas, my heart almost bleeds! What a multitude of precious souls are now before me! How shortly must all be ushered into eternity:—And yet, O cutting thought! was God now to require all your souls, how few, comparatively speaking, could really say, the *Lord our righteousness*.

And think you, O sinners, that you will be able to stand in the day of judgment, if Christ be not your righteousness! No, that alone is the wedding-garment in which you must appear.—Oh, christless sinners, I am distressed for you!—The desires of my soul are enlarged.—Oh, that this may be an accepted time! Oh, that the Lord may be your righteousness!—For whither would you flee, if death should find you naked?—Indeed there is no hiding yourselves from his presence.—The pitiful fig-leaves of your own righteousness will not cover your nakedness, when God shall call you to stand before him.—Adam found them ineffectual, and so will you.—Oh, think of death! Oh, think of judgment! Yet a little while, and time shall be no more: and then what will become of you, if the Lord be not your righteousness? Think you, that Christ will spare you? No, He that formed you, will have no mercy on you. If you are out of Christ, if Christ be not your righteousness, Christ himself shall pronounce you damned.—And can you bear to think of being damned by Christ? Can you bear to hear the Lord Jesus say unto you, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*? Can you live, think you, in everlasting burnings? Is your flesh

brass, and your bones iron? What if they are? hell-fire, that fire prepared for the devil and his angels, will heat them through and through! And can you bear to depart from Christ! Oh, that heart-piercing thought! Ask those holy souls, who are at any time bewailing an absent God, who walk in darkness, and see no light, though but a few days or hours; ask them, what it is to lose a sight and presence of Christ?—See how they seek him sorrowing, and go mourning after him all the day long! And if it is so dreadful to lose the sensible presence of Christ, only for a day, what must it be to be banished from him to all eternity?—But thus it must be, if Christ be not your righteousness.—For God's justice must be satisfied; and unless Christ's righteousness is imputed and applied to you here, you must be satisfying the divine justice in hell torments eternally hereafter. Nay, as I said before, Christ himself, the God of love, shall condemn you to that place of torment.——And oh, how cutting is that thought—Methinks I see poor, trembling, chistleless wretches, standing before the bar of God, crying out, Lord, if we must be damned, let some angel, or some archangel pronounce the damnatory sentence. But all in vain.—Christ himself shall pronounce the irrevocable sentence.—Knowing therefore the terrors of the Lord, let me persuade you to close with Christ, and never rest, till you can say, the Lord our righteousness.—Who knows, but the Lord may have mercy on, nay, abundantly pardon you?—Beg of God to give you faith;—and if the Lord give you that, you will by it receive Christ, with his righteousness, and his all. You need not fear the greatness or number of your sins.—For are you sinners? so am I. Are you the chief of sinners? so am I. Are you backsliding sinners? so am I. And yet the Lord (for ever adored be his rich, free, and sovereign grace) the Lord is my righteousness.

Come then, O young men, who (as I acted once myself) are playing the prodigal, and wandering away afar off from your heavenly Father's house, come home, come home, and leave your swines trough.---Feed no longer on the husks of sensual delights.---For Christ's sake, arise and come home!---Your heavenly Father now calls you.---See yonder the best robe, even the righteousness of his dear Son awaits you.---See it, view it again and again.---Consider at how dear a rate it was purchased, even by the blood of God.---Consider what great need you have of it.---You are lost, undone, damned for ever, without it.---Come then, poor, guilty prodigals, come home.---Indeed, I will not, like the elder brother, be angry.---No, I will rejoice with the angels in heaven: And oh, that God would now bow the heavens, and come down! "Descend, O Son of God, descend; and as thou hast shewn in me such mercy, O let the blessed Spirit apply thy righteousness to some prodigals now before thee, and clothe their naked souls with thy best robe."

But I must speak a word to you, young maidens, as well as young men.---I see many of you adorned, as to your bodies;---But are not your souls naked! Which of you can say, the Lord is my righteousness? Which of you was ever solicitous to be dressed in this robe of invaluable price, and without which, you are no better than whited sepulchres in the sight of God?---Let not then so many of you, young maidens, any longer forget your only ornament:---Oh, seek for the Lord to be your righteousness, or otherwise burning will soon be upon you instead of beauty!

And what shall I say to you of a middle age, you busy merchants, you cumbred Martha's, who with all your gettings, have not yet gotten the Lord to be your righteousness? Alas! what profit will there

be of all your labour under the sun, if you do not secure this pearl of invaluable price? This one thing, so absolutely needful, that it can only stand you in stead, when all other things shall be taken from you. Labour therefore no longer so anxiously for the meat which perisheth, but henceforward seek for the Lord to be your righteousness.---A righteousness that will entitle you to life everlasting.---I see also many hoary heads here, and perhaps the most of them cannot say, the Lord is my righteousness.---O grey-headed sinners, I could weep over you!--Your grey hairs, which ought to be your crown, and in which perhaps you glory, is now your shame. You know not that the Lord is your righteousness. Oh, haste then, haste ye, aged sinners, and seek an interest in redeeming love!--Alas, you have one foot already in the grave.---Your glass is just run out.---Your sun is just going down, and it will set and leave you in an eternal darkness, unless the Lord be your righteousness!-----Flee then, oh flee for your lives! Be not afraid.---All things are possible with God. If you come, though it be at the eleventh hour, Christ Jesus will in no wise cast you out. Oh, seek then for the Lord to be your righteousness, and beseech him to let you know how it is that a man may be born again when he is old!--But I must not forget the lambs of the flock.---To feed them was one of my Lord's last commands.---I know he will be angry with me, if I do not tell them, that the Lord may be their righteousness; and that of such is the kingdom of heaven.---Come then, ye little children, come to Christ; the Lord Christ shall be your righteousness.---Do not think, that you are too young to be converted.---Perhaps many of you may be nine or ten years old, and yet cannot say the Lord is our righteousness; which many have said, though younger than you.---Come then, while you are young.---

Perhaps you may not live to be old.—Do not stay for other people.—If your fathers and mothers will not come to Christ, do you come without them.—Let children lead them, and shew them how the Lord may be their righteousness.—Our Lord Jesus loved little children—You are his lambs—He bids me feed you.—I pray God make you willing sometimes to take the Lord for your righteousness.

Here then I could conclude,—but I must not forget the poor negroes—No, I must not. Jesus Christ has died for them, as well as others. Nor do I mention you last, because I despise your souls, but because I would have what I have to say, make the deeper impression upon your hearts.—Oh that you would seek the Lord to be your righteousness!—Who knows but he may be found of you.—For in Jesus Christ there is neither male or female, bond or free; even you may be the children of God, if you believe in Jesus. Did you never read of the Eunuch belonging to the queen of Candace?—a negro like yourselves.—He believed.—The Lord was his righteousness, he was baptized. Do you also believe, and you shall be saved.—Christ Jesus is the same now, as he was yesterday, and will wash you in his own blood.—Go home then, turn the words of the text into a prayer, and intreat the Lord to be your righteousness.—*Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly, into all our souls! Amen, Lord Jesus, Amen and Amen.*

S E R M O N II.

The Seed of the Woman, and the Seed of the Serpent.

GENESIS iii. 15.

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

WHEN I read to you these words, I may address you in the language of the holy angels to the shepherds, that were watching their flocks by night; *Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy.* For this is the first promise that was made of a Saviour to the apostate race of Adam. We generally look for Christ only in the New Testament; but Christianity, in one sense, is very near as old as the creation. It is wonderful to observe, how gradually God revealed his Son to mankind. He began with the promise in the text, and this the elect lived upon till the time of Abraham. To him God made further discoveries of his eternal counsel concerning man's redemption. Afterwards, at sundry times, and in divers manners, God spake to the fathers by the prophets, till at length the Lord Jesus himself was manifested in the flesh, and came and tabernacled amongst us.

This first promise must certainly be but dark to our first parents, in comparison of that light which we now enjoy. And yet, dark as it was, we may assure ourselves they built upon it their hopes of everlasting salvation, and by that faith were saved.

How they came to stand in need of this promise, and what is the extent and meaning of it, I intend, God willing, to make the subject-matter of your present meditation.

The fall of man is written in too legible characters not to be understood: those that deny it, by their denying prove it. The very heathens confessed and bewailed it: They could see the streams of corruption running through the whole race of mankind, but could not trace them to the fountain-head. Before God gave a revelation of his Son, man was a riddle to himself. And Moses unfolds more in this one chapter (out of which the text is taken) than all mankind could have been capable of finding out of themselves, though they had studied to all eternity.

In the foregoing chapter, he had given us a full account, how God spoke the world into being; and especially how he formed man of the dust of the earth, and breathed into him the breath of life, so that he became a living soul. A council of the Trinity was called concerning the formation of this lovely creature. The result of that council was, *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him.* Moses remarkably repeats the words, that we might take particular notice of our divine original. Never was so much expressed in so few words. None but a man inspired could have done so. But it is remarkable, that though Moses mentions our being made in the image of God, yet he mentions it but twice, and that, as it were, in a transient manner, as though he would have said, "Man was made in honour, God made him upright, in the image of God male and female created he them. But man so soon fell, and became like the beasts that perish, nay, like the devil himself, that it is scarce worth mentioning."

How soon man fell after he was created, is not told us, and therefore to fix any time, is to be wise above what is written. And, I think, they who suppose that man fell the same day in which he was made, have no sufficient ground for their opinion. The many things which are crowded together in the former chapter, such as the formation of Adam's wife, his giving names to the beasts, and his being put into the garden which God had planted, I think require a longer space of time than a day to be transacted in. However all agree in this, "Man stood not long." How long or how short a while, I will not take upon me to determine. It more concerns us to enquire how he came to fall from his steadfastness, and what was the rise and progress of the temptation which prevailed over him. The account given us in this chapter concerning it, is very full, and it may do us much service, under God, to make some remarks upon it.

Now the serpent, says the sacred historian, was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made; and he said unto the woman, yea, both God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

Though this was a real serpent, yet he that spoke was no other than the devil; from hence, perhaps, called the old serpent, because he took possession of the serpent when he came to beguile our first parents. The devil envied the happiness of man, who was made, as some think, to supply the place of fallen angels. God made man upright, and with full power to stand if he would. He was just, therefore, in suffering him to be tempted: if he fell, he had no one to blame except himself. But how must Satan effect his fall? He cannot do it by power, he attempts it therefore by policy. He takes possession of a serpent, which was more subtil than all the beasts of the field, which the Lord God

had made; so that men that are full of subtilty, but have no piety, are only machines for the devil to work upon, just as he pleases.

And he said unto the woman. Here is an instance of his subtilty. He says unto the woman, the weaker vessel, and when she was alone from her husband, and therefore was more liable to be overcome, *Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?* These words are certainly spoken in answer to something which the devil either saw or heard. In all probability, the woman was now near the tree of knowledge of good and evil; (for we shall find her, by and by, plucking an apple from it,) perhaps she might be looking at, and wondering what there was in that tree more than the others, that she and her husband should be forbidden to taste of it. Satan seeing this, and coveting to draw her into a parley with him, (for if the devil can persuade us not to resist, but to commune with him, he hath gained a great point) he says, *Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree in the garden?* The first thing he does, is to persuade her, if possible, to entertain hard thoughts of God; this is his general way of dealing with God's children. "Yea, says he, hath God said, "ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" "What! hath God planted a garden and placed "you in the midst of it only to teaze and perplex "you? hath he planted a garden, and yet forbid you "making use of any of the fruits of it at all?" It was impossible for him to ask a more ensnaring question in order to gain his end: For Eve was here seemingly obliged to answer, and vindicate God's goodness. And therefore,

Ver. 2, 3. The woman said unto the serpent,
*We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:
But, of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of*

the garden, God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

The former part of the answer was good, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, God has not forbid us eating of every tree of the garden. No, we may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, (and it should seem even of the tree of life, which was as a sacrament to man in a state of innocence) there is only one tree in the midst of the garden, of which God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." Here she begins to warp, and sin begins to conceive in her heart. Already she has contracted some of the serpent's poison, by talking with him, which she ought not to have done at all. For she might easily suppose, that it could be no good being, that could put such a question unto her, and insinuate such dishonourable thoughts of God. She should therefore have fled from him, and not stood to have parleyed with him at all. Immediately the ill effects of it appear, she begins to soften the divine threatning. God had said, *the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*; or, *dying thou shalt die*: But Eve says, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. We may be assured we are fallen into, and begin to fall by temptation, when we begin to think God will not be as good as his word, in respect to the execution of his threatenings denounced against sin. Satan knew this, and therefore artfully

Said unto the woman, (ver. 4.) *Ye shall not surely die*, in an insinuating manner, "Ye shall not surely die. Surely God will not be so cruel as to damn you only for eating an apple, it cannot be." Alas! how many does Satan lead captive at his will, by flattering them, that they shall not surely die? that hell-torments will not be eternal, that God is all mercy; that he therefore will not

punish a few years sin with an eternity of misery. But Eve found God as good as his word, and so will all they that go on in sin, under a false hope that they shall not surely die.

We may also understand the words spoken positively, and this is agreeable to what follows; you shall not surely die; "it is all a delusion, a mere bugbear to keep you in a servile subjection."

For, ver. 5. *God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*

What child of God can expect to escape slander, when God himself was thus slandered even in paradise? Surely the understanding of Eve must have been, in some measure, blinded, or she would not have suffered the tempter to speak such perverse things. In what odious colours is God here represented! "God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, ye shall be as gods," (equal with God.) So that the grand temptation was, that they should be hereafter under no controul, equal, if not superior to God that made them knowing good and evil. Eve could not tell what Satan meant by this; but, to be sure, she understood it of some great privilege which they were to enjoy. And thus Satan now points out a way, which seems right to sinners, but does not tell them the end of that way is death.

To give strength and force to this temptation, in all probability, Satan, or the serpent, at this time, plucked an apple from the tree, and eat it before Eve, by which Eve might be induced to think, that the sagacity and power of speech, which the serpent had above the other beasts, must be owing, in a great measure, to his eating that fruit; and therefore, if he received so much improvement, she might also expect alike benefit from it. All this, I think, is clear; for, otherwise, I do not see with

what propriety it could be said, *when the woman saw that it was good for food.* How could she know it was good for food, unless she had seen the serpent feed upon it?

Satan now begins to get ground apace. Lust had conceived in her heart; shortly it will bring forth sin. Sin being conceived, brings forth death. Ver. 6. *And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband, and he did eat.*

Our senses are the landing ports of our spiritual enemies. How needful is that resolution of holy Job, *I have made a covenant with mine eyes.* When Eve began to gaze on the forbidden fruit with her eyes, she soon began to long after it with her heart. When she saw that it was good for food, and pleasant to the eyes, (here was the lust of the flesh, and lust of the eye) but, above all, a tree to be desired to make one wise, wiser than God would have her be, nay, as wise as God himself; she took of the fruit thereof, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. As soon as ever she sinned herself, she turned tempter to her husband. It is dreadful when those, who should be help-mates for each other in the great work of their salvation, are only promoters of each others damnation: but thus it is. If we ourselves are good, we shall excite others to goodness; if we do evil, we shall entice others to do evil also. There is a close connection between doing and teaching. How needful then is it for us all to take heed that we do not sin any way ourselves, lest we should become factors for the devil, and ensnare, perhaps, your nearest and dearest relations? *She gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.*

Alas! what a complication of crimes was there

In this one single act of sin! Here is an utter disbelief of God's threatening; the utmost ingratitude to their Maker, who had so lately planted this garden and placed them in it, with such a glorious and comprehensive charter. Here is the utmost neglect of their posterity, who they knew were to stand or fall with them: here was the utmost pride of heart; they wanted to be equal with God: here is the utmost contempt put upon his threatening and his law; the devil is credited and obeyed before him, and all this only to satisfy their sensual appetite. Never was a crime of such a complicated nature committed by any here below. Nothing but the devil's apostacy and rebellion could equal it.

And what are the consequences of their disobedience? Are their eyes opened? Yes, their eyes are opened; but, alas! it is only to see their own nakedness. For, we are told, *ver. 7. that the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked:* Naked of God, naked of every thing that was holy and good; and destitute of the divine image, which they before enjoyed. They might rightly now be termed *Ichabod*; for the glory of the Lord departed from them. Oh! how low did these sons of the morning then fall! out of God into themselves; from being partakers of the divine nature, into the nature of the devil and the beast. Well, therefore, might they know that they were naked not only in body but in soul.

And how do they behave now they are naked? Do they flee to God for pardon! Do they seek to him for a robe to cover their nakedness? No. They were now dead to God, earthly, sensual, devilish; and therefore, instead of applying to God for mercy, they *sewed, or platted fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons, or things to gird about them.* This is a lively representation of all natural men; We see that we are naked: We, in

some measure, confess it; but, instead of looking up to God for succour, we patch up a righteousness of our own (as our first parents platted fig-leaves together) hoping to cover our nakedness by that. But our righteousness will not stand the severity of God's judgment: It will do us no more service than the fig-leaves did Adam and Eve, that is, none at all.

For, ver. 8. *They heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the trees of the garden, in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife (notwithstanding their fig-leaves) hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God, among the trees of the garden.*

They heard the voice of the Lord God, or the Word of the Lord God, even the Lord Jesus Christ, who is *the Word that was with God, and the Word that was God*. They heard him walking in the trees of the garden, in the *cool of the day*. A season, perhaps, when Adam and Eve used to go, in an especial manner, and offer up an evening sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. The *cool of the day*. Perhaps, the sin was committed early in the morning, or at noon; but God would not come upon them immediately, he staid till the cool of the day. For if we would effectually reprove others, we should not do it, when they are warmed with passion but wait till the cool of the day.

But what an alteration is here! Instead of rejoicing at the voice of their Beloved, instead of meeting him with open arms, and enlarged hearts, as before, they hide themselves in the trees of the garden. Alas, what a foolish attempt was this? Surely they must be naked, otherwise, how could they think of hiding themselves from God? Whither could they flee from his presence? But, by their fall, they had contracted an enmity against God: They now hated, and were afraid to converse with God their Maker. And is not this our case

by nature? assuredly it is. We labour to cover our nakedness, with the fig-leaves of our own righteousness: We hide ourselves from God as long as we can; and will not come, and never should come, did not the Father prevent, draw, and sweetly constrain us by his grace, as he here prevented Adam.

Ver. 9. *And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Adam, where art thou?*

"The Lord God called unto Adam," (for otherwise Adam would never have called unto the Lord God) and said, *Adam, where art thou?* "How is it, that thou comest not to pay thy devotions as usual?" Christians, remember the Lord keeps an account when you fail coming to worship. Whenever, therefore, you are tempted to withhold your attendance, let each of you fancy you heard the Lord God calling unto you, and saying, "O man, O woman, where art thou?" It may be understood in another and better sense, *Adam, where art thou?* What a condition is thy poor soul in? This is the first thing the Lord asks, and convinces a sinner of, when he prevents; and calls him effectually by his grace. He also calls him by name: For unless God speaks to us in particular, and we know where we are, how poor, how miserable, how blind, how naked, we shall never value the redemption wrought out for us by the death and obedience of the dear Lord Jesus. *Adam, where art thou?*

Ver. 10. *And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid. See what cowards sin makes us. If we knew no sin, we should know no fear. Because I was naked, and I hid myself.* Ver.

11. *And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I (thy Maker and Lawgiver) commanded thee, that thou shouldst not eat?*

God knew very well that Adam was naked, and

that he had eaten of the forbidden fruit: But God would know it from Adam's own mouth. Thus God knows all our necessities before we ask, but yet insists upon our asking for his grace, and confessing our sins. For, by such acts, we acknowledge our dependence upon God, take shame to ourselves, and thereby give glory to his great name.

Ver. 12. *And the man said, the woman which thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.*

Never was nature more lively delineated. See what pride Adam contracted by the fall! How unwilling he is to lay the blame upon, or take shame to himself. This answer is full of insolence towards God, enmity against his wife, and dissimulation in respect to himself. For herein he tacitly reflects upon God. *The woman that THOU gavest to be with me.* As much as to say, *If THOU hadst not given me THAT WOMAN, I had not eaten the forbidden fruit.* Thus when men sin, they lay the fault upon their passions; then blame and reflect upon God for giving them those passions. Their language is, "The appetites that THOU gavest us, they deceived us, and therefore we sinned against thee." But, as God, notwithstanding, punished Adam for hearkening to the voice of his wife, so he will punish those who hearken to the dictates of their corrupt inclinations. For God compels no man to sin. Adam might have withstood the solicitations of his wife, if he would. And so, if we look up to God we should find grace to help in the time of need. The devil and our own hearts tempt, but they cannot force us to consent, without the concurrence of our own wills. So that our damnation is of ourselves, as it will evidently appear at the great day, notwithstanding all mens present impudent replies against God. As Adam speaks insolently in respect to God, so he speaks

with enmity against his wife: The woman, or *this woman, she gave me*. He lays all the fault upon her, and speaks of her with much contempt. He does not say, my wife, my dear wife, but *this woman*. For sin disunites the most united hearts. It is the bane of holy fellowship. Those who have been companions in sin here, if they die without repentance, will both hate and condemn one another hereafter. All damned souls are accusers of their brethren. Thus it is, in some degree, on this side the grave. *The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat*. What a dissingenuous speech was here! He makes use of no less than fifteen words to excuse himself, and but one or two (in the original) to confess his fault, if it may be called a confession at all. *The woman which thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree*: here are fifteen words; *and I did eat*. With what reluctance do these last words come out? How soon are they uttered? *And I did eat*. But thus it is with an unhumbléd, unregenerate heart. It will be laying the fault upon the dearest friend in the world, nay, upon God himself, rather than take shame to itself. This pride we are all subject to by the fall; and, till our hearts are broken, and made contrite by the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be always charging God foolishly. *Against THEE, and THEE only, have I sinned, that thou mightest be justified in thy saying, and clear when thou art judged*, is the language of none but those, who, like David, are willing to confess their faults, and are truly sorry for their sins. This was not the case of Adam: his heart was not broken; and therefore he lays the fault of his disobedience upon his wife and God, and not upon himself: *The woman which THOU gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat*.

Ver. 13. *And the Lord God said, what is this*

that thou hast done? What a wonderful concern does God express in this expostulation! "What a deluge of misery hast thou brought upon thyself, thy husband; and thy posterity? What is this that thou hast done? Disobeyed thy God, obeyed the devil, and ruined thy husband, for whom I made thee to be an help-meet? What is this that thou hast done?" God would here awaken her to a sense of her crime and danger, and therefore, as it were, thunders in her ears. For the law must be preached to self-righteous sinners. We must take care of healing, before we see sinners wounded, lest we should say, *Peace, peace*, where there is no peace. Secure sinners must hear the thundering of mount Sinai, before we bring them to mount Sion. They who never preach up the law, it is to be feared, are unskilful in delivering the glad tidings of the gospel. Every minister should be a Boanerges, a son of thunder, as well as a Barnabas, a son of consolation. There was an earthquake and a whirlwind, before the small still voice came to Elijah: we must first shew people they are condemned, and then shew them how they must be saved. But how and when to preach the law, and when to apply the promises of the gospel, wisdom is profitable to direct. *And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done?*

And the woman said, the serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. She does not make use of so many words to excuse herself, as her husband; but her heart is as unhumbled as his. What is this, says God, that thou hast done? God here charges her with doing it. She dares not deny the fact, or say, I have not done it; but she takes all the blame off herself, and lays it upon the serpent: *The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.* She does not say, "Lord, I was to blame for talking with the serpent,"

“ Lord, I did wrong, in not hastening to my
“ husband, when he put the first question to me;
“ Lord, I plead guilty, I only am to blame, oh let
“ not my poor husband suffer for my wickedness!”
This would have been the language of her heart,
had she now been a true penitent. But both were
now alike proud; therefore neither will lay the
blame upon themselves: *The serpent beguiled me, and
I did eat; the woman which thou gavest to be with
me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.*

I have been the more particular in remarking
this part of their behaviour, because it tends so
much to the magnifying of free grace, and plainly
shews us salvation cometh only from the Lord.
Let us take a short view of the miserable circum-
stances our first parents were now in: they were
legally and spiritually dead, children of wrath, and
heirs of hell; they had eaten the fruit, of which
God had commanded them, that they should not
eat; and when arraigned before God, notwithstand-
ing their crime was so complicated, they could not
be brought to confess it. What reason can be
given, why sentence of death should not be pro-
nounced against the prisoners at the bar? All must
own they are worthy to die. Nay, how can God,
consistently with his justice, possibly forgive them?
He had threatened, that the day wherein they eat
of the forbidden fruit, they should *surely die*; and,
if he did not execute this threatening, the devil
might then slander the Almighty indeed. And
yet mercy cries, Spare these sinners, spare the
work of thine own hands. Behold then wisdom
contrives a scheme how God may be just, and yet
be merciful; be faithful to his threatening, punish
the offence, and at the same time spare the offen-
der. An amazing scene of divine love here opens
to our view, which had been from all eternity hid
in the heart of God! Notwithstanding Adam and

Eve were thus unhumbled, and did not so much as put up one single petition for pardon, God immediately passes sentence upon the serpent, and reveals to them a Saviour.

Ver. 14. *And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art accursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life, i. e. he should be in subjection, and his power should always be limited and restrained. His enemies shall lick the dust, says the Psalmist.*
 Ver. 15. *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

Before I proceed to the explanation of this verse, I cannot but take notice of one great mistake, which the author of the *Whole Duty of Man* is guilty of, in making this verse contain a covenant between God and Adam, as though God personally treated with Adam, as before the fall. For talking of the second covenant, in his preface concerning caring for the soul, says he, "This second covenant was made with Adam, and us in him, presently after the fall, and is contained in these words, Gen. iii. 15. where God declares *the seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head*; and this was made up, as the first was, of some mercies to be afforded by God, and some duties to be performed by us." This is exceeding false divinity: For these words are not spoken to Adam; they are directed only to the serpent. Adam and Eve stood by as criminals; and God could not treat with them, because they had broken his covenant. And it is so far from being a covenant, wherein "some mercies are to be afforded by God, and some duties to be performed by us," that here is not a word looking that way; it is only a declaration of a free gift of salvation through Jesus

Christ our Lord. God the Father and God the Son had entered into a covenant concerning the salvation of the elect from all eternity; wherein God the Father promised, that if the Son would offer his soul a sacrifice for sin, he should see his seed. Now this is an open revelation of this secret covenant, and therefore God speaks in the most positive terms, *It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* The first Adam God had treated with before; he proved false; God therefore to secure the second covenant from being broken, puts it into the hands of the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. Adam, after the fall, stood no longer as our representative; he and Eve were only private persons as we are, and were only to hold on the declaration of mercy contained in this promise by faith (as they really did) and by that they were saved. I do not say, but we are to believe and obey, if we are everlastingly saved. Faith and obedience are conditions, if we only mean that they in order go before our salvation; but I deny that these are proposed by God to Adam, or that God treats with him in this promise, as he did before the fall under the covenant of works. For, how could that be, when Adam and Eve were now prisoners at the bar, without strength to perform any conditions at all? The truth is this: God as a reward of Christ's sufferings, promised to give the elect faith and repentance, in order to bring them to eternal life. And both these and every thing else necessary for their everlasting happiness, are infallibly secured to them in this promise, as Mr. Boston, an excellent Scotch divine, sweetly and clearly shews, in a book intituled, *A view of the covenant of grace.*

This is, by no means, an unnecessary distinction; it is a matter of great importance: For want of knowing this, people have been so long

missed. They have been taught that they must do so and so, as though they were under a covenant of works, and then for DOING this, they should be saved. This is plainly the whole drift of the book wrongly intituled, *The whole duty of man*. Whereas, on the contrary, people should be taught, that the Lord Jesus was the second Adam, with whom the Father entered into covenant for fallen man: that they can now do nothing of or for themselves, and should therefore come to God, beseeching him to give them faith, by which they shall be enabled to lay hold on the righteousness of Christ; and that faith they will then shew forth by their works, out of love and gratitude to the ever blessed Jesus, their most glorious Redeemer, for what he has done for their souls. This is a consistent scriptural scheme: without holding this, we must run into one of those two bad extremes; I mean, Antinomianism on the one hand, or Arminianism on the other: from both which may the good Lord deliver us!

But to proceed: by the *seed of the woman*, we are here to understand the Lord Jesus Christ, who, though very God of very God, was, for us men and our salvation, to have a body prepared for him by the Holy Ghost, and to be born of a woman who never knew man, and by his obedience and death make an atonement for man's transgression, and bring in an everlasting righteousness, work in them a new nature, and thereby bruise the serpent's head, *i. e.* destroy his power and dominion over them. By the *serpent's seed*, we are to understand the devil and all his children, who are permitted by God to tempt and sift his children. But, blessed be God, he can reach no further than our heel.

It is not to be doubted but Adam and Eve understood this promise in this sense; for it is plain, in

the latter part of the chapter, sacrifices were instituted. From whence should those skins come, but from beasts slain for sacrifice, of which God made them coats? We find Abel, as well as Cain, offering sacrifice in the next chapter: and the apostle tells us, he did it *by faith*, no doubt in this promise. And Eve, when Cain was born, said, *I have gotten a man from the LORD*; or, (as Mr. Henry observes, it may be rendered) *I have gotten a man*,—THE LORD,—the promised Messiah. Some further suppose, that Eve was the first believer; and therefore they translate it thus, the *seed* (not of THE, but) of THIS *woman*; which magnifies the grace of God so much the more, that she, who was first in the transgression, should be the first partaker of redemption. Adam believed also, and was saved: for unto Adam and his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed THEM, which was a remarkable type of their being clothed with the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This promise was literally fulfilled in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Satan bruised his heel, when he tempted him for forty days together in the wilderness: he bruised his heel, when he raised up strong persecution against him, during the time of his public ministry: he, in an especial manner, bruised his heel, when our Lord complained, that his *soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death, and he sweate great drops of blood falling upon the ground*, when praying in the garden: he bruised his heel, when he put it into the heart of Judas to betray him: and he bruised him yet most of all, when his emissaries nailed him to an accursed tree, and our Lord cried out, *My God, my God! why hast thou forsaken me?* Yet in all this, the blessed Jesus, the seed of the woman, bruised Satan's accursed head: for, in that he was tempted: he

was able to succour those that are tempted. By his stripes we are healed. The chastisement of our peace was upon him. By dying, he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil. He thereby spoiled principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them upon the cross.

This promise has been, is, and will be fulfilled in the elect of God, considered collectively, as well before, as after the coming of our Lord in the flesh: for they may be called the *seed of the woman*. Marvel not, that *all who will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution*. In this promise, there is an eternal enmity put between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent; so that those that are born after the flesh, cannot but persecute those that are born after the Spirit. This enmity shewed itself soon after this promise was revealed, in Cain's bruising the heel of Abel: it continued in the church through all ages before Christ came in the flesh, as the history of the Bible and the xith chapter of the Hebrews plainly shew. It raged exceedingly after our Lord's ascension; witness the Acts of the Apostles, and the history of the primitive Christians. It now rages, and will continue to rage and shew itself, in a greater or less degree, to the end of time. But let not this dismay us; for in all this the seed of the woman is more than conqueror, and bruises the serpent's head. Thus the Israelites, the more they were oppressed, the more they encreased. Thus it was with the apostles; thus it was with their immediate followers. So that Tertullian compares the church in his time to a mowed field; the more frequently it is cut, the more it grows. The blood of the martyrs was always the seed of the church. And I have often sat down with wonder and delight, and admired how God has made

the very schemes which his enemies contrived in order to hinder, become the most effectual means to propagate his gospel. The devil has had so little success in persecution, that if I did not know that he and his children, according to this verse, could not but persecute, I should think he would count it his strength to sit still. What did he get by persecuting the martyrs in queen Mary's time? Was not the grace of God exceedingly glorified in their support? What did he get by persecuting the good old Puritans? Did it not prove the peopling of New England? Or to come nearer our own times, What hath he got by putting us out of the synagogues? Hath not the word of God, since that, mightily prevailed? My dear hearers, you must excuse me for enlarging on this head; God fills my soul generally, when I come to this topic. I can say with Luther, "If it were not for persecuting on, I should not understand the scripture." If Satan should be yet suffered to bruise my heel further, and his servants should thrust me into prison, I doubt not, but even that would only tend to the more effectual bruising of his head. I remember a saying of the then Lord Chancellor to the pious Bradford: "Thou hast done more hurt," said he, by thy exhortations in private in prison, "than thou didst in preaching before thou wast put in," or words to this effect. The promise of the text is my daily support; *I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

Further: This promise is also fulfilled, not only in the church in general, but in every individual believer in particular. In every believer there are two seeds, the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent; the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. It is with the believer, when quickened with grace in his heart,

as it was with Rebecca, when she had conceived Esau and Jacob in her womb; she felt a struggling, and began to be uneasy; *If it be so*, says she, *why am I thus?* Thus grace and nature struggle, (if I may so speak) in the womb of a believer's heart: But, as it was there said, the elder shall serve the younger; so it is here,—grace in the end shall get the better of nature; the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. Many of you that have believed in Christ, perhaps may find some particular corruption yet strong, so strong, that you are sometimes ready to cry out with David, *I shall fall one day by the hand of Saul.* But, fear not, the promise in the text insures the perseverance and victory of believers over sin, Satan, death, and hell. What if indwelling corruption does yet remain, and the seed of the serpent bruise your heel, in vexing and disturbing your righteous souls? Fear not, though faint, yet pursue: You shall yet bruise the serpent's head. Christ hath died for you; and yet a little while, and he will send death to destroy the very being of sin in you. Which brings me

To shew the most extensive manner in which the promise of the text shall be fulfilled, viz. at the final judgment, when the Lord Jesus shall present the elect to his Father, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, glorified both in body and soul.

Then shall the seed of the woman give the last and fatal blow, in bruising the serpent's head. Satan, the accuser of the brethren, and all his accursed seed, shall then be cast out, and never suffered to disturb the seed of the woman any more. Then shall the righteous shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, and sit with Christ on thrones in majesty on high.

Let us, therefore, not be weary of well-doing; for we shall reap an eternal harvest of comfort

If we faint not. Dare, dare, my dear brethren in Christ, to follow the Captain of your salvation, who was made perfect through sufferings. The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. Fear not men. Be not too much cast down at the deceitfulness of your hearts. Fear not devils; you shall get the victory even over them. The Lord Jesus has engaged to make you more than conquerors over all. Plead with your Saviour, plead: Plead the promise in the text. Wrestle, wrestle with God in prayer. If it has been given you to believe, fear not if it should also be given you to suffer. Be not any wise terrified by your adversaries; the King of the church has them all in a chain: Be kind to them; pray for them; but fear them not. The Lord will yet bring back his ark, tho' at present driven into the wilderness; and Satan like lightening shall fall from heaven.

Are there any enemies of God here? The promise of the text encourages me to bid you defiance: *The seed of the woman, the ever-blessed Jesus, shall bruise the serpent's head.* What signifies all your malice? You are only raging waves of the sea, foaming out your own shame. For you, without repentance, is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. The Lord Jesus sits in heaven, ruling over all, and causing all things to work for his childrens good: he laughs you to scorn: he hath you in the utmost derision, and therefore so will I. Who are you that persecute the children of the ever-blessed God? Though a poor stripling, the Lord Jesus, the seed of the woman, will enable me to bruise your heads.

My brethren in Christ, I think I do not speak thus in my own strength, but in the strength of my Redeemer. I know in whom I have believed; I am persuaded he will keep that safe, which I have committed unto him. He is faithful who hath

promised, that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. May we all experience a daily completion of this promise, both in the church and in our hearts, till we come to the church of the first-born, the spirits of just men made perfect, in the presence and actual fruition of the great God our heavenly Father!

To whom, with the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all honour, power, might, majesty, and dominion, now and for evermore. Amen.

S E R M O N III.

Persecution every Christian's Lot.

2 TIMOTHY iii. 12.

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.

WHEN our Lord Jesus was pleased to take upon himself the form of a servant, and go about preaching the kingdom of God, he took all opportunities in public, and more especially in private, to caution his disciples against seeking great things for themselves; and also to forewarn them of the many distresses, afflictions, and persecutions, which they must expect to endure and go through for his name's sake. The great St. Paul therefore, the author of this epistle, in this, as in all other things, following the steps of his blessed Master, takes particular care, among other apostolical ad-

monitions, to warn young Timothy of the difficulties he must expect to meet with in the course of his ministry: "This know also," says he, (ver. 1. of this chapter) "that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts; ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." Now, as *Jannes and Jambres* (two of the Egyptian magicians) *withstood Moses* (by working sham-miracles) *so do these also resist the truth*; and (notwithstanding they keep up the form of religion) *are men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith*. But, in order to keep him from sinking under their opposition, he tells him, that though God, for wise ends, permitted these false teachers, as he did the magicians, to oppose for some time, yet they should now proceed no farther. *For their folly*, says he, *shall be made manifest unto all men, as theirs* (the magicians) *also was*, when they could not stand before Moses, because of the boil; for the boil was upon the magicians, as well as upon all the Egyptians. And then, to encourage Timothy yet the more, he propounds to him his own example; "But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured; but out of them all

"the Lord delivered me." And then, lest Timothy might think that this was only the particular case of Paul, *Yea*, says he, in the words of the text, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.

The words, without considering them as they stand in relation to the context, contain a necessary and important truth, viz. that *persecution* is the common lot of every godly man. This is a hard saying. How few can bear it? I trust God, in the following discourse, will enable me to make it good, by shewing,

- I. What it is to *live godly in Christ Jesus*.
 - II. The different kinds of *persecution* to which they, who *live godly*, are exposed.
 - III. Why it is, that *godly* men must expect to suffer *persecution*?
- Lastly*, We shall apply the whole.

And *first*, Let us consider what it is to *live godly in Christ Jesus*; this supposes, that we are made the righteousness of God in Christ, that we are born again, and are made one with Christ by a living faith, and a vital union, even as Jesus Christ and the Father are one. Unless we are thus converted, and transformed by the renewing of our minds, we cannot properly be said to be in Christ, much less to live godly in him. To be in Christ merely by baptism, and an outward profession, is not to be in him in the strict sense of the word: No; *They that are in Christ Jesus, are new creatures; old things are passed away, and all things are become new in their hearts.* Their life is hid with Christ in God; their souls daily feed on the invisible realities of another world. To live godly in Christ, is to make the divine will, and not our own, the sole principle of all our thoughts, words, and acti-

ous; so that, *whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we do all to the glory of God.* Those who live godly in Christ, may not so much be said to live, as Christ to live in them: he is their alpha and omega, their first and last, their beginning and end. They are led by his Spirit, as a child is led by the hand of its father; and are willing to follow the Lamb whithersoever he leads them. They hear, know, and obey his voice. Their affections are set on things above. Their hopes are full of immortality; their citizenship is in heaven. Being born again of God, they habitually live to, and daily walk with God. They are pure in heart; and, from a principle of faith in Christ, are holy in all manner of conversation and godliness.

This is to live godly in Christ Jesus: And hence we may easily learn, why so few suffer persecution? because, so few live godly in Christ Jesus. You may attend on outward duties; you may live morally in Christ, *i. e.* you may do (as they term it) no one any harm, and avoid persecution: But they *that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution.*

2. Secondly, What is the meaning of the word *persecution*, and how many kinds there are of it, I come now to consider.

The word *persecution* is derived from a Greek word signifying to *pursue*, and generally implies "pursuing a person for the sake of his goodness, or God's good-will to him." The first kind of it, is that of the heart. We have an early example of this in that wicked one Cain, who, because the Lord had respect to Abel and his offering, and not to him and his offering, was very wroth, his countenance fell, and at length he cruelly slew his envied brother. Thus the Pharisees hated and persecuted our Lord long before they laid hold on him: And our Lord mentions being inwardly hated

of men, as one kind of persecution his disciples were to undergo. This heart-enmity (if I may so term it) is the root of all other kinds of persecution, and is, in some degree or other, to be found in the soul of every unregenerated man; and numbers are guilty of this persecution, who never have it in their power to persecute any other way. Nay, numbers would be carried out actually to put in practice all other degrees of persecution, was not the name of persecution become odious amongst mankind, and did they not hereby run the hazard of losing their reputation. Alas! how many at the great day, whom we know not now, will be convicted and condemned, that all their life harboured a secret evil will against Zion! They may now screen it before men; but God seeth the enmity of their hearts, and will judge them as persecutors at the great and terrible day of judgment!

A second degree of persecution is that of the tongue; *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* Many I suppose think it no harm to shoot out arrows, even bitter words, against the disciples of the Lord: they scatter their fire-brands, arrows, and death, saying, *Are we not in sport?* But, however they may esteem it, in God's account evil-speaking is a high degree of persecution. Thus Ishmael's mocking Isaac in the Old, is termed persecuting him in the New Testament. *Blessed are ye,* says our Lord, *when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my name's sake.* From whence we may gather, that reviling and speaking all manner of evil falsely for Christ's sake is a high degree of persecution. For *a good name,* says the wise man, *is better than precious ointment,* and to many is dearer than life itself. It is a great breach of the sixth commandment, to slander any one; but to speak evil of and slander the disciples of Christ, merely

because they are his disciples, must be highly provoking in the sight of God; and such who are guilty of it (without repentance) will find that Jesus Christ will call them to an account, and punish them for all their ungodly and hard speeches in a lake of fire and brimstone. This shall be their portion to drink.

The third and last kind of persecution, is that which expresses itself in actions; as when wicked men separate the children of God from their company; *blessed are ye, says our Lord when they shall separate you from their company: or expose them to church-censures. They shall put you out of their synagogues; threatening and prohibiting them from making an open profession of his religion or worship; or interdicting ministers for preaching his word, as the high priests threatened the apostles, and forbade them any more to speak in the name of Jesus; and Paul breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord: Or when they call them into courts; you shall be called before governors, says our Lord: Or when they fine, imprison, or punish them, by confiscation of goods, cruel scourging, and, lastly, death itself.*

It would be impossible to enumerate in what various shapes persecution has appeared. It is a many-headed monster, insatiable as hell, cruel as the grave; and, what is worse, it generally appears under the cloak of religion. But, cruel, insatiable, and horrid as it is, they that live godly in Christ Jesus, must expect to suffer and encounter with it in all its forms.

This is what we are to make good under our next general head.

3. *Thirdly*, Why is it that godly men must expect to suffer persecution? And,

First, This appears from the whole tenor of our Lord's doctrine. We will begin with his divine

sermon on the mount. *Blessed, says he, are they who are persecuted for righteousness sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* So that, if our Lord spoke truth, we are not so blessed as to have an interest in the kingdom of heaven, unless we are or have been *persecuted for righteousness sake.* Nay, our Lord (it is remarkable) employs three verses in this beatitude, and only one in each of the others; not only to shew, that it was a thing which men (as men) are unwilling to believe, but also the necessary consequence of it upon our being Christians. This is likewise evident from all those passages, wherein our Lord informs us, that he came upon the earth, not to send peace, but a sword; and that the father-in-law shall be against the mother-in-law, and that a man's foes shall be those of his household. Passages, which though confined by false prophets to the first, I am persuaded will be verified by the experience of all true Christians in this, and every age of the church. It would be endless to recount all the places, wherein our Lord forewarns his disciples, that they should be called before rulers, and thrust out of synagogues, nay, that the time would come, wherein men should think they did God service to kill them. For this reason he so frequently declared, that unless a man *for sake all that he had, and even hated life itself, he could not be his disciple.* And therefore it is worthy our observation, that in that remarkable passage, wherein our Lord makes such an extensive promise to those who *left all for him*, cariously inserts persecution. *And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time; houses and brethren, and sisters and mothers, and children and lands, with persecutions; (the word is in the plural number, including all kinds*

of persecution) and *in the world to come eternal life*. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what Christ says in all these passages, and then confess, that *all who will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution*.

As this is proved from our Lord's doctrine, so it is no less evident from his life. Follow him from the manger to the cross, and see whether any persecution was like that which the Son of God, the Lord of glory, underwent whilst here on earth. How was he hated by wicked men? How often would that hatred have excited them to take hold of him, had it not been for fear of the people? How was he reviled, counted and called a blasphemer, a wine-bibber, a Samaritan, nay, a devil, and, in one word, had all manner of evil spoken against him falsely? What contradiction of sinners did he endure against himself? How did men separate from his company, and were ashamed to walk with him openly? Infomuch that he once said to his own disciples, *Will you also go away?* Again, how was he stoned, thrust out of the synagogues, arraigned as a deceiver of the people, a seditious and pestilent fellow, an enemy to Cæsar, and as such scourged, blindfolded, spit upon, and at length condemned, and nailed to an accursed tree? Thus was the Master persecuted; thus did the Lord suffer; and the servant is not above his Master, nor the disciple above his Lord: *If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you*, saith the blessed Jesus. And again, *every man that is perfect, that is, a true Christian, must be as his Master, i. e. suffer as he did*. For all these things our Lord has set us an example, that we should follow his steps: And therefore, God forbid that any who would live godly in Christ Jesus, should henceforward expect to escape suffering persecution.

But farther: Not only our Lord's example, but

the example of all the saints that ever lived, evidently demonstrates the truth of the apostle's assertion in the text. How soon was Abel made a martyr for his religion? How was Isaac mocked by the son of the bond-woman! And what a large catalogue of suffering Old Testament saints have we recorded in the xi. chapter of the Hebrews! Read the Acts of the apostles, and see how the first Christians were threatened, stoned, imprisoned, scourged, and persecuted even unto death. Examine church-history in after-ages, and you will find the murder of the innocents by Herod, was but an earnest of the innocent blood which should be shed for the name of Jesus. Examine the experience of saints now living on earth; and if it were possible to consult the spirits of just men made perfect, I am persuaded each would concur with the apostle in asserting, that *all who will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.*

How can it be otherwise in the very nature of things? Ever since the fall, there has been an irreconcilable enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. Wicked men hate God, and therefore cannot but hate those who are like him: They hate to be reformed, and therefore must hate and persecute those who, by a contrary behaviour, testify of them, that their deeds are evil. Besides, pride of heart leads men to persecute the servants of Jesus Christ. If they commend them, they are afraid of being asked, "Why do not you follow them?" And therefore because they dare not imitate, though they may sometimes be even forced to approve their way, yet pride and envy make them turn persecutors. Hence it is, that as it was formerly, so it is now, and so will it be to the end of time; he that is born after the flesh, the natural man, does and will persecute him that is born after the Spirit, the rege-

nerate man. Because Christians are not of the world, but Christ hath chosen them out of the world, therefore the world will hate them. If it be objected against this doctrine, "that we now live in a Christian world, and therefore must not expect such persecution as formerly;" I answer, "All are not Christians that are called so; and, till the heart is changed, the enmity against God (which is the root of all persecution) remains," and consequently Christians, falsely so called, will persecute as well as others. I observed therefore, in the beginning of this discourse, that Paul mentions those that had a form of religion, as persons of whom Timothy had need be chiefly aware: For, as our Lord and his apostles were mostly persecuted by their countrymen the Jews, so we must expect the like usage from the formalists of our own nation, the Pharisees, who seem to be religious. For the most horrid and barbarous persecutions have been carried on by those who have called themselves Christians; witness the days of queen Mary, and the fines, banishments, and imprisonments of the children of God in the last century, and the bitter irreconcilable hatred that appears in thousands who call themselves Christians, even in the present days wherein we live.

Persons, who argue against persecution now, are not sufficiently sensible of the bitter enmity of the heart of every unregenerate man against God. For my own part, I am so far from wondering that Christians are persecuted, that I wonder our streets do not run with the blood of the saints: Was mens power equal to their wills, such a horrid spectacle would soon appear. But,

Persecution is necessary in respect to the godly themselves. If we have not all manner of evil spoken of us, how can we know whether we love contempt, and seek only that honour which cometh from

above? If we have not persecutors, how can our passive graces be kept in exercise? How can many Christian precepts be put into practice? How can we love, pray for, and do good to those who despitefully use us? How can we overcome evil with good? In short, how can we know we love God better than life itself? St. Paul was sensible of all this, and therefore so positively and peremptorily asserts, that *all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.*

Not that I affirm, "All are persecuted in a like degree." No: This would be contrary both to scripture and experience. But though all Christians are not really called to suffer every kind of persecution, yet all Christians are liable thereto: And notwithstanding some may live in more peaceful times of the church than others, yet all Christians, in all ages, will find by their own experience, that, whether they act in a private or public capacity, they must, in some degree or other, suffer persecution.

Here then I would pause, and, *lastly*, by way of application, exhort all persons,

First, to stand a while and examine themselves. For by what has been said, you may gather one mark, whereby you may judge whether you are Christians or not. Were you ever persecuted for righteousness sake? If not, you never yet lived godly in Christ our Lord. Whatever you may say to the contrary, the inspired apostle, in the words of the text (the truth of which, I think, I have sufficiently proved) positively asserts, that *all that will live godly in HIM, shall suffer persecution.* Not that all who are persecuted are real Christians; for many sometimes suffer, and are persecuted on other accounts than for righteousness sake. The great question therefore is, "Whether you were ever persecuted for living godly?" You may boast

(as perhaps you may think) of your great prudence and sagacity, (and indeed these are excellent things) and glory because you have not run such lengths, and made yourselves so singular, and liable to such contempt, as some others have. But, alas! this is not a mark of your being of a Christian, but of a Laodicean spirit, neither hot nor cold, and fit only to be spewed out of the mouth of God. That which you call prudence, is often only cowardice, dreadful hypocrisy, pride of heart, which makes you dread contempt, and afraid to give up your reputation for God. You are ashamed of Christ and his gospel; and in all probability, was he to appear a second time upon earth, in words, as well as works, you would deny him. Awake therefore, all ye that live only formally in Christ Jesus, and no longer seek that honour which cometh of man. I do not desire to court you, but I intreat you to live godly, and fear not contempt for the sake of Jesus Christ. Beg of God to give you his Holy Spirit, that you may see through, and discover the latent hypocrisy of your hearts, and no longer deceive your own souls. Remember you cannot reconcile two irreconcilable differences, God and Mammon, the friendship of this world, with the favour of God. Know you not who hath told you, that the *friendship of this world is enmity with God*? If therefore you are in friendship with the world, notwithstanding all your specious pretences to piety, you are at enmity with God: You are only heart-hypocrites, and, *What is the hope of the hypocrite, when God shall take away his soul*? Let the words of the text sound an alarm in your ears—Oh let them sink deep into your hearts; yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.

Secondly, From the words of the text, I would take occasion to speak to those, “who are about

"to list themselves under the banner of Christ's cross." What say you? Are you resolved to *live godly in Christ Jesus*, notwithstanding the consequence will be, that you *must suffer persecution*? You are beginning to build, but have you taken our Lord's advice, to sit down first and count the cost? Have you well weighed with yourselves that weighty declaration, *he that loveth father or mother more than ME, is not worthy of ME*; and again, *Unless a man forsake all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple*? Perhaps some of you have great possessions; will not you go away sorrowful, if Christ should require you to sell all that you have! Others of you again may be kinsmen, or some way related, or under obligations, to the high priests, or other great personages, who may be persecuting the church of Christ: What say you? Will you, with Moses, rather chuse to *suffer affliction with the people of God, than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season*? Perhaps you may say, "My friends will not oppose me." That is more than you know: In all probability your chief enemies will be those of your own household. If therefore they should oppose you, are you willing naked to follow a naked Christ? and to wander about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, in dens and caves of the earth, being afflicted, destitute, tormented, rather than not be Christ's disciples? You are now all following with zeal, as Ruth and Orpah did Naomi, and may weep under the word; but are not your tears crocodile's tears? And when difficulties come, will you not go back from following your Lord, as Orpah departed from following Naomi? Have you really the root of grace in your hearts? Or, are you only stony-ground hearers? You receive the word with joy; but, when persecution arises because of the word, will you not be immediately offended? Be not angry with me for putting these questions to you. I am jea-

lous over you, but it is with a godly jealousy: For, alas! how many have put their hands to the plough, and afterwards have shamefully looked back? I only deal with you, as our Lord did with the person that said, *Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou wilt.* *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man, says he, hath not where to lay his head.* What say you? Are you willing to endure hardness, and thereby approve yourselves good soldiers of Jesus Christ? You now come on foot out of the towns and villages to hear the word, and receive me as a messenger of God: But will you not by and by cry out, *Away with him, away with him; it is not fit such a fellow should live upon the earth?* Perhaps some of you, like Hazael, may say, *Are we dogs, that we should do this?* But, alas! I have met with many unhappy souls, who have drawn back unto perdition, and have afterwards accounted me their enemy, for dealing faithfully with them; though once, if it were possible, they would have *plucked out their own eyes, and have given them unto me.* Sit down therefore, I beseech you, and seriously count the cost, and ask yourselves again and again, whether you *count all things but dung and dross*, and are willing to suffer the loss of all things, *so that you may win Christ, and be found in him*: For you may assure yourselves, the apostle hath not spoken in vain, *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.*

Thirdly, The text speaks to you that are patiently suffering for the truth's sake: *Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; great shall be your reward in heaven.* For to you it is given not only to believe, but also to suffer, and perhaps remarkably too, for the sake of Jesus! This is a mark of your discipleship, an evidence that you do live godly in Christ Jesus. Fear not therefore, neither be dismayed. Oh, be not weary and faint in your minds! Jesus, your

Lord, your life, cometh, and his reward is with him. Though all men forsake you, yet will not he: No; the Spirit of Christ and of glory shall rest upon you. In patience therefore possess your souls. Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts. Be in nothing terrified by your adversaries: On their part Christ is evil spoken of; on your part he is glorified. Be not ashamed of your glory, since others can glory in their shame. Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, wherewith you are or may be tried. The devil rages, knowing that he hath but a short time to reign. He or his emissaries have no more power than what is given them from above; God sets them their bounds, which they cannot pass; and the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; no one shall set upon you to hurt you, without your heavenly Father's knowledge. Do your earthly friends and parents forsake you? Are you cast out of the synagogues? The Lord shall reveal himself to you, as to the man that was born blind. Jesus Christ shall take you up. If they carry you to prison, and load you with chains, so that the iron enter into your souls, even there shall Christ send an angel from heaven to strengthen you, and enable you, with Paul and Silas, to sing praises at midnight. Are you threatened to be thrown into a den of lions, or cast into a burning fiery furnace, because you will not bow down and worship the beast? Fear not; the God, whom you serve, is able to deliver you: Or, if he should suffer the flames to devour your bodies, they would only serve as so many fiery chariots, to carry your souls to God. Thus it was with the martyrs of old; so that one, when he was burning, cried out, "Come, you Papists, if you want a miracle, here, behold one! This bed of flames is to me a bed of down." Thus it was with almost all that suffered in former times: For Jesus,

notwithstanding he withdrew his own divinity from himself, yet has always lifted up the light of his countenance upon the souls of suffering saints. *Fear not therefore those that can kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do: but fear him only, who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.* Dare, dare, to live godly in Christ Jesus, though you suffer all manner of persecution. But,

Fourthly, Are there any true ministers of Jesus Christ here? You will not be offended if I tell you, that the words of the text are in an especial manner applicable to you. St. Paul wrote them to Timothy; and we, of all men, that live godly in Christ Jesus, must expect to suffer the severest persecution. Satan will endeavour to bruise our heels, let who will escape: And it has been the general way of God's providence in times of persecution to permit the shepherds first to be smitten, before the sheep are scattered. Let us not therefore shew that we are only hirelings, who care not for the sheep; but, like the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, let us readily lay down our lives for the sheep. Whilst others are boasting of their great preferments, let us rather glory in our great afflictions and persecutions for the sake of Christ. St. Paul now rejoices that he suffered afflictions and persecutions at Iconium and Lystra: Out of all the Lord delivered him; out of all the Lord will deliver us, and cause us hereafter to sit down with him on thrones, when he comes to judge the twelve tribes of Israel.

I could proceed; but I am conscious in this part of my discourse, I ought more particularly to speak to myself, knowing that Satan has desired to have me, that he may *sift me as wheat*. I know I must (how can it be avoided?) suffer great things for Christ's name sake. Without a spirit of prophecy, we may easily discern the signs of the times. Per-

secution is even at the doors: The tabernacle of the Lord is already driven into the wilderness: The ark of the Lord is fallen into the unhallowed hands of uncircumcised Philistines. They have long since put us out of their synagogues, and high priests have been calling on civil magistrates to exert their authority against the disciples of the Lord. Men in power have been breathing out threatenings: We may easily guess what will follow, imprisonment, and slaughter. The storm has been gathering some time; it must break shortly. Perhaps it will fall on me first.

Brethren therefore, whether in the ministry or not, I beseech you, *pray for me*, that I may never suffer justly, as an evil-doer, but only for righteousness sake. Oh! Pray that I may not deny my Lord in any wise, but that I may joyfully follow him, both to prison and to death, if he is pleased to call me to seal his truths with my blood. Be not ashamed of Christ, or of his gospel, though I should become a prisoner of the Lord. Though I am bound, the word of God will not be bound: No; an open, an effectual door is opened for the preaching the everlasting gospel, and men or devils shall never be able to prevail against it. Only pray, whether it be in life or death, Christ may be glorified in me: Then I shall rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

And now to whom shall I address myself next?

Fifthly, To those, "who persecute their neighbours for living godly in Christ Jesus." But, what shall I say to you? Howl and weep for the miseries that shall come upon you: for a little while the Lord permits you to ride over the heads of his people; but, by and by, death will arrest you, judgment will find you, and Jesus Christ shall put a question to you, which will strike you dumb, "Why persecuted you me? You may plead your

laws and your canons, and pretend what you do is out of zeal for God; but God shall discover the cursed hypocrisy and serpentine enmity of your hearts, and give you over to the tormentors. It is well, if, in this life, God does not set some mark upon you. He pleaded the cause of Naboth, when innocently condemned for blaspheming God and the King; and our Lord sent forth his armies, and destroyed the city of those who killed the prophets, and stoned them that were sent unto them. If you have a mind therefore to fill up the measure of your iniquities, go on, persecute and despise the disciples of the Lord: but know, that *for all these things, God shall bring you into judgment.* Nay, those you now persecute, shall be in part your judges, and sit on the right-hand of the Majesty on High, whilst you are dragged by infernal spirits into a lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, and the smoke of your torment shall be ascending up forever and ever. Lay down therefore, ye rebels, your arms against the most high God, and no longer persecute those who live godly in Christ Jesus. The Lord will plead, the Lord will avenge their cause. You may be permitted to bruise their heels, yet in the end they shall bruise your accursed heads. I speak not this, as though I were afraid of you; for I know in whom I have believed: Only out of pure love I warn you, and because I know not but Jesus Christ may make some of you vessels of mercy, and snatch you, even you persecutors, as firebrands out of the fire. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, even persecutors, the worst of sinners: his righteousness is sufficient for them; his spirit is able to purify and change their hearts. He once converted Saul: may the same God magnify his power, in converting all those who are causing the godly in Christ Jesus, as much as in them

lies, to suffer persecution! The Lord be with you all. Amen.

S E R M O N IV.

Abraham's offering up his Son Isaac.

GENESIS xxii. 12.

And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing though hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

THE great Apostle Paul, in one of his epistles, informs us, that *whatsoever was written aforetime was written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the holy scripture might have hope.* And as without faith it is impossible to please God, or to be accepted in Jesus, the Son of his love; we may be assured, that whatever instances of a more than common faith are recorded in the book of God, they were more immediately designed by the Holy Spirit for our learning and imitation, upon whom the ends of the world are come. For this reason, the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, in the xith chapter, mentions a noble catalogue of Old Testament saints and martyrs, *who subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, stopped the mouths of lions, &c. and are gone before us to inherit the promises.* A sufficient confutation, I think, of their error, who lightly esteem the Old Testament saints; and would not have them mentioned to Christians, as persons whose faith and patience we

are called upon more immediately to follow. If this was true, the apostle would never have produced such a cloud of witnesses out of the Old Testament, to excite the Christians of the first, and consequently purest age of the church, to continue stedfast and unmoveable in the profession of their faith. Amidst this catalogue of saints, methinks, the patriarch Abraham shines the brightest, and differs from the others, as one star differeth from another star in glory; for he shone with such distinguished lustre, that he was called the *friend of God*, the *father of the faithful*: and those who believe on Christ, are said to be sons and daughters of, and to be blessed with, faithful Abraham. Many trials of his faith did God send this great and good man, after he had commanded him to get out from his country, and from his kindred, unto a land which he should shew him; but the last was the most severe of all, I mean, that of offering up his only son. This, by the divine assistance, I propose to make the subject of your present meditation, and, by way of conclusion, to draw some practical inferences, as God shall enable me, from this instructive story.

The sacred penman begins the narrative thus; verse 1. *And it came to pass, after these things, God did tempt Abraham. After these things*, that is, after he had underwent many severe trials before, after he was old, full of days, and might flatter himself perhaps that the troubles and toils of life were now finished; *after these things, God did tempt Abraham*. Christians, you know not what trials you may meet with before you die; notwithstanding you may have suffered, and been tried much already, yet, it may be, a greater measure is still behind, which you are to fill up. *Be not high-minded, but fear*. Our last trials, in all probability, will be the greatest: and

we can never say our warfare is accomplished, or our trials finished, till we bow down our heads, and give up the ghost. *And it came to pass, after these things, that God did tempt Abraham.*

God did tempt Abraham. But can the scripture contradict itself? Does not the apostle James tell us, *that God tempts no man;* and God does tempt no man to evil, or on purpose to draw him into sin; for, when a man is thus tempted, he is drawn away of his own heart's lust, and enticed. But in another sense, God may be said to tempt, I mean, to try his servants; and in this sense we are to understand that passage of Matthew, where we are told, that *Jesus was led up by the Spirit (the good Spirit) into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil.* And our Lord, in that excellent form of prayer which he has been pleased to give us, does not require us to pray that we may not absolutely be led into temptation, but delivered from the evil of it; whence we may plainly infer, that God sees it fit sometimes to lead us into temptation, that is, to bring us into such circumstances as will try our faith, and other Christian graces. In this sense we are to understand the expression before us, *God did tempt or try Abraham.*

How God was pleased to reveal his will at this time to his faithful servant, whether by the Shechinah, or divine appearance, or by a small still voice, as he spoke to Elijah, or by a whisper, like that of the Spirit to Philip, when he commanded him to join himself to the Eunuch's chariot, we are not told, nor is it material to enquire. It is enough that we are informed, God said unto him, Abraham; and that Abraham knew it was the voice of God: for *he said, Behold, here I am.* O what a holy familiarity (if I may so speak) is there between God and those holy souls that are united to him by faith in Christ Jesus! God says, Abraham; and Abra-

ham said (it should seem without the least surprise) *Behold, here I am.* Being reconciled to God by the death and obedience of Christ, which he rejoiced in, and saw by faith afar off; he did not, like guilty Adam, seek the trees of the garden to hide himself from, but takes pleasure in conversing with God, and talketh with him, as a man talketh with his friend. O that CHRIST-less sinners knew what it is to have fellowship with the Father and the Son! They would envy the happiness of saints, and count it all joy to be termed enthusiasts and fools for Christ's sake.

But what does God say to Abraham? Ver. 2. *Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I shall tell thee of.*

Every word deserves our particular observation. Whatever he was to do, he must do it now, immediately, without conferring with flesh and blood. But what must he do? *Take now thy son.* Had God said, take now a firstling, or choicest lamb or beast of thy flock, and offer it up for a burnt-offering, it would not have appeared so ghastly: but for God to say, *Take now thy son, and offer him up for a burnt-offering*, one would have imagined, was enough to stagger the strongest faith. But this is not all: It must not only be a son, but *thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest.* If it must be a son, and not a beast, that must be offered, why will not Ishmael do, the son of the bond-woman? No, it must be his *only son*, the heir of all, his Isaac, by interpretation *laughter*, the son of his old age, in whom his soul delighted; *whom thou lovest*, says God, in whose life his own was wraped up: And this son, this only son, this Isaac, the son of his love, must be taken now, even now, without delay, and be offered up by his own father, for a burnt-offering, upon one

of the mountains of the which God would tell him.

Well might the apostle, speaking of this man of God, say, *that against hope he believed in hope, and, being strong in faith, gave glory to God*: For, had he not been blessed with faith, which man never before had, he must have refused to comply with this severe command. For how many arguments might nature suggest, to prove that such a command could never come from God, or to excuse himself from obeying it? "What! (might the good man have said) butcher my own child! it is contrary to the very law of nature: Much more to butcher my dear son Isaac, in whose seed God himself has assured me, that all the families of the earth shall be blessed. But supposing I could give up my own affections, and be willing to part with him, though I love him so dearly, yet, if I murder him, what will become of God's promise? Besides I am now like a city built upon a hill; I shine as a light in the world, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation: How then shall I cause God's name to be blasphemed, how shall I become a by-word among the heathen, if they hear that I have committed a crime which they abhor! But, above all, what will Sarah my wife say? How can I ever return to her again, after I have imbrued my hands in my dear child's blood? O that God would pardon me in this thing, or take my life in the place of my son's!" Thus, I say, Abraham might have argued, and that too seemingly with great reason, against complying with the divine command. But as before by faith he considered not the deadness of Sarah's womb, when she was past age, but believed on him, who said, "Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed;" so now being convinced that the same God spoke to, and commanded him to offer up that son, and know-

ing that God was able to raise him from the dead, without delay he obeys the heavenly call.

O that unbelievers would learn of faithful Abraham, and believe whatever is revealed from God, though they cannot fully comprehend it! Abraham knew God commanded him to offer up his son, and therefore believed, notwithstanding carnal reasoning might suggest many objections. We have sufficient testimony, that God has spoken to us by his Son; why should we not also believe, though many things in the New Testament are above our reason? For, where reason ends, faith begins. And, however infidels may style themselves reasoners, of all men they are the most unreasonable: For is it not contrary to all reason, to measure an infinite by a finite understanding, or think to find out the mysteries of godliness to perfection?

But to return to the patriarch Abraham: We observed before what plausible objections he might have made; but he answered not a single word: No, without replying against his Maker, we are told, ver. 3. that *Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up and went unto the place of which God had told him.*

From this verse we may gather, that God spoke to Abraham in a dream, or vision of the night: For it is said, he *rose up early*. Perhaps it was near the fourth watch of the night, just before break of day, when God said, *Take now thy son;* and Abraham rises up early to do so; as I doubt not but he used to rise early to offer up his morning-sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. It is often remarked of people in the Old Testament, that they rose early in the morning; and particularly of our Lord in the New, that he rose a great while before day to pray. The morning befriends

devotion; and if people cannot use so much self-denial as to rise early to pray, I know not how they will be able to die at a stake (if called to it) for Jesus Christ.

The humility, as well as piety of the patriarch, is observable: He saddled his own ass (great men should be humble;) and to shew his sincerity, though he took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, yet he keeps his design as a secret from them all: Nay, he does not so much as tell Sarah his wife: For he knew not but she might be a snare unto him in this affair; and, as Rebecca afterwards, on another occasion, advised Jacob to flee, so Sarah also might persuade Isaac to hide himself; or the young men, had they known of it, might have forced him away, as in after-ages the soldiers rescued Jonathan out of the hands of Saul. But Abraham sought no such evasion, and therefore, like an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile, he himself resolutely *clave the wood for the burnt-offering, rose up and went unto the place of which God had told him.* In the second verse, God commanded him to offer up his son upon one of the mountains which he would tell him of. He commanded him to offer his son up, but would not then directly tell him the place where: This was to keep him dependent and watching unto prayer: For there's nothing like being kept waiting upon God; and, if we do, assuredly God will reveal himself unto us yet further in his own time. Let us practise what we know, follow providence so far as we can see already; and what we know not, what we see not as yet, let us only be found in the way of duty, and the Lord will reveal even that unto us. Abraham knew not directly where he was to offer up his son; but he rises up and sets forward, and behold now God shews him: *and he went to the*

place of which God had told him. Let us go and do likewise.

Ver. 4. *Then on the third day Abraham lift up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.*

So that the place, of which God had told him, was no less than three days journey distant from the place where God first appeared to him, and commanded him to take his Son. Was not this to try his faith, and to let him see that what he did, was not merely from a sudden pang of devotion, but a matter of choice and deliberation? But who can tell what the aged patriarch felt during these three days? Strong as he was in faith, I am persuaded his bowels often yearned over his dear son Isaac. Methinks I see the good old man walking with his dear child in his hand, and now and then looking upon him, loving him, and then turning aside to weep. And perhaps, sometimes he stays a little behind to pour out his heart before God, for he had no mortal to tell his case to. Then, methinks, I see him join his son and servants again, and talking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, as they walked by the way. At length, *on the third day, he lift up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.* And, to shew that he was yet sincerely resolved to do whatsoever the Lord required of him, he even now will not discover his design to his servants, but said, ver. 5. *to his young men, (as we should say to our worldly thoughts when about to tread the courts of the Lord's house) abide you here with the ass; and I and the lad will go up yonder and worship, and come again to you.* This was a sufficient reason for their staying behind, and, it being their master's custom to go frequently to worship, they could have no suspicion of what he was going about. And by Abraham's saying, that he and the lad would come again, I am apt to think he believed God would raise him from

the dead, if so be he permitted him to offer his child up for a burnt-offering. However that be, he is yet resolved to obey God to the uttermost; and therefore,

Ver. 6. *Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and they went both of them together.* Little did Isaac think that he was to be offered on that very wood which he was carrying upon his shoulders; and therefore, ver. 7. Isaac innocently, and with a holy freedom (for good men should not keep their children at too great a distance) *spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father; and he (with equal affection and holy condescension) said, Here am I, my son.* And to shew how careful Abraham had been (as all Christian parents ought to be) to instruct his Isaac how to sacrifice to God, like a youth trained up in the way wherein he should go; Isaac said, *Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?* How beautiful is early piety! How amiable, to hear young people ask questions about sacrificing to God in an acceptable way! Isaac knew very well that a lamb was wanting, and that a lamb was necessary for a proper sacrifice: *Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?* Young men and maidens, learn of him.

Hitherto, it is plain, Isaac knew nothing of his father's design: But I believe, by what his father said in answer to his question, that now was the time Abraham revealed it unto him.

Ver. 8. *And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering.* Some think that Abraham by faith saw the Lord Jesus afar off, and here spake prophetically of that Lamb of God already slain in decree, and hereafter to be actually offered up for sinners. This was a

lamb of God's providing indeed (we dared not have thought of it) to satisfy his own justice, and to render him just in justifying the ungodly. What is all our fire and wood, the best preparation and performances we can make or present, unless God had provided himself this Lamb for a burnt-offering? He could not away with them. The words will well bear this interpretation. But, whatever Abraham might intend, I cannot but think he here made an application, and acquainted his son of God's dealing with his soul; and at length, with tears in his eyes, and the utmost affection in his heart, cried out, *Thou art to be the lamb, my son*; God has commanded me to provide thee for a burnt-offering, and to offer thee upon the mountain which we are now ascending. And, as it appears from a subsequent verse, Isaac, convinced that it was the divine will, made no resistance at all: For it is said, *they went both of them together*; and again, ver. 9. when we are told, that Abraham bound Isaac, we do not hear of his complaining, or endeavouring to escape, which he might have done, being (as some think) near thirty years of age, and it is plain, capable of carrying wood enough for a burnt-offering. But he was partaker of the like precious faith with his aged father, and therefore is as willing to be offered, as Abraham is to offer him: And so they went both of them together.

Ver. 9. At length they came to the place of which God had told Abraham. He built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.

And here let us pause a while, and by faith take a view of the place where the father has laid him. I doubt not but the blessed angels hovered round the altar and sang, *Glory be to God in the highest*, for giving such faith to man. Come, all ye tender-hearted parents, who know what it is to look over

a dying child: Fancy that you saw the altar erected before you, and the wood laid in order, and the beloved Isaac bound upon it: Fancy that you saw the aged parent standing by weeping. (For, why may we not suppose that Abraham wept, since Jesus himself wept at the grave of Lazarus?) O what pious, endearing expressions passed now alternately between the father and the son! Josephus records a pathetic speech made by each, whether genuine I know not: but methinks I see the tears trickle down the patriarch Abraham's cheeks; and, out of the abundance of the heart, he cries, Adieu, adieu, my son; the Lord gave thee to me, and the Lord calls thee away; blessed be the name of the Lord: adieu, my Isaac, my only son, whom I love as my own soul; adieu, adieu. I see Isaac at the same time meekly resigning himself into his heavenly Father's hands, and praying to the most High to strengthen his earthly parent to strike the stroke. But why do I attempt to describe what either son or father felt? It is impossible: we may indeed form some faint idea of, but shall never fully comprehend it, till we come and sit down with them in the kingdom of heaven, and hear them tell the pleasing story over again.—Hasten, O Lord, that blessed time! O let thy kingdom come!

And now, ver. 10. The fatal blow is going to be given. *And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.* But do you not think he intended to turn away his head, when he gave the blow? Nay, why may we not suppose he sometimes drew his hand in, after it was stretched out, willing to take another last farewell of his beloved Isaac, and desirous to defer it a little, though resolved at last to strike home? Be that as it will, his arm is now stretched out, the knife is in his hand, and he is about to put it to his dear son's throat.

But sing, O heavens! and rejoice, O earth! Man's

extremity is God's opportunity: for behold, just as the knife, in all probability, was near his throat, ver. 11. "the angel of the Lord, (or rather, the "Lord of angels, Jesus Christ, the angel of the ever-
"lasting covenant) called unto him, (probably in a
"very audible manner) from heaven, and said, Abra-
"ham, Abraham. (The word is doubled, to engage
"his attention; and perhaps the suddenness of the
"call made him draw back his hand, just as he
"was going to strike his son.) And Abraham said,
"Here am I."

*And he said, ver. 12. Lay not thine hand upon the
lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: For now know
I that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld
thy son, thine only son from me.*

Here then it was that Abraham received his son Isaac from the dead in a figure. He was in effect offered upon the altar, and God looked upon him as offered and given unto him. Now it was that Abraham's faith, being tried, was found more precious than gold purified seven times in the fire. Now as a reward of grace, though not of debt, for this signal act of obedience, by an oath, God gives and confirms the promise, *that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed*, ver. 17, 18. With what comfort may we suppose the good old man and his son went down from the mount, and returned unto the young men! With what joy may we imagine he went home, and related all that had passed to Sarah! And above all, with what triumph is he exulting now in the paradise of God, and adoring rich, free, distinguishing, electing, everlasting love, which alone made him to differ from the rest of mankind, and rendered him worthy of that title which he will have so long as the sun and the moon endure, *the father of the faithful!*

But let us now draw our eyes from the creature, and do what Abraham, if he was present, would

direct to; I mean, fix them on the Creator, God blessed for evermore.

I see your hearts affected, I see your eyes weep, (and indeed, who can refrain weeping at the relation of such a story?) But, behold, I shew you a mystery, hid under the sacrifice of Abraham's only son, which, unless your hearts are hardened, must cause you to weep tears of love, and that plentifully too. I would willingly hope you even prevent me here, and are ready to say, "it is the love of God, in giving Jesus Christ to die for our sins. Yes; that is it." And yet perhaps you find your hearts, at the mentioning of this, not so much affected. Let this convince you, that we are all fallen creatures, and that we do not love God or Christ as we ought to do: for, if you admire Abraham offering up his Isaac, how much more ought you to extol, magnify, and adore the love of God, who so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son, Christ Jesus our Lord, *that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life?* May we not well cry out, now know we, O Lord, that thou hast loved us, since thou hast not withheld thy Son, thine only son from us? Abraham was God's creature, (and God was Abraham's friend) and therefore under the highest obligation to surrender up his Isaac. But O stupendious love! whilst we were his enemies, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that he might become a curse for us. O the freeness, as well as the infinity, of the love of God our Father! It is unsearchable: I am lost in contemplating it; it is past finding out. Think, O believers, think of the love of God, in giving Jesus Christ to be a propitiation for our sins. And when you hear how Abraham built an altar, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood; think how your heavenly Father bound Jesus Christ his only Son,

and offered him upon the altar of his justice, and laid upon him the iniquities of us all. When you read of Abraham's stretching forth his hand to slay his son, think, O think, how God actually suffered his Son to be slain, that we might live for evermore. Do you read of Isaac carrying the wood upon his shoulders, upon which he was to be offered? Let this lead you to mount Calvary, (this very mount of Moriah where Isaac was offered, as some think) and take a view of the antitype Jesus Christ, that Son of God, bearing and ready to sink under the weight of that cross on which he was to hang for us. Do you admire Isaac so freely consenting to die, though a creature, and therefore obliged to go when God called? O do not forget to admire infinitely more the dear Lord Jesus, that promised seed, who willingly said, *Lo, I come, tho' under no obligation so to do, to do thy will*, to obey and die for men, O God! Did you weep just now, when I bid you fancy you saw the altar, and the wood laid in order, and Isaac laid bound on the altar? Look up by faith, behold the blessed Jesus, our all-glorious Emanuel, not bound, but nailed on an accursed tree: see how he hangs crowned with thorns, and had in derision of all that are round about him: see how the thorns pierce him, and how the blood in purple streams trickle down his sacred temples! Hark how the God of nature groans! See how he bows his head, and at length humanity gives up the ghost! Isaac is saved, but Jesus, the God of Isaac, dies: a ram is offered up in Isaac's room, but Jesus has no substitute; Jesus must bleed, Jesus must die; God the Father provided this Lamb for himself from all eternity. He must be offered in time, or man must be damned for evermore. And now where are all your tears? Shall I say, refrain your voice from weeping? No, rather let me exhort you to look to

him whom you have pierced, and mourn as a woman mourneth for her first-born: for we have been the betrayers, we have been the murderers of this Lord of glory; and shall we not bewail those sins, which brought the blessed Jesus to the accursed tree? Having so much done, so much suffered for us, so much forgiven, shall we not love much? O! let us love him with all our hearts, and minds, and strength, and glorify him in our souls and bodies, for they are his. Which leads me to a second inference I shall draw from the foregoing discourse.

From hence we may learn the nature of true, justifying faith. Whoever understands and preaches the truth as it is in Jesus, must acknowledge, that salvation is God's free gift, and that we are saved, not by any or all the works of righteousness which we have done or can do: No; we can neither wholly nor in part justify ourselves in the sight of God. The Lord Jesus Christ is our righteousness; and if we are accepted with God, it must be only in and through the personal righteousness, the active and passive obedience, of Jesus Christ his beloved Son. This righteousness must be imputed, or counted over to us, and applied by faith to our hearts, or else we can in no wise be justified in God's sight: and that very moment a sinner is enabled to lay hold on Christ's righteousness by faith, he is freely justified from all his sins, and shall never enter into condemnation, notwithstanding he was a firebrand of hell before. Thus it was that Abraham was justified before he did any good work; He was enabled to believe on the Lord Christ; it was accounted to him for righteousness; that is, Christ's righteousness was made over to him, and so accounted his. This, this is gospel; this is the only way of finding acceptance with God: good works have nothing to do with our justification in his sight. We are

justified by faith alone, as faith the article of our church; agreeable to which the apostle Paul says, *By grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.* Notwithstanding good works have their proper place: They justify our faith, though not our persons; they follow it, and evidence our justification in the sight of men. Hence it is that the apostle James asks, was not Abraham justified by works? (alluding no doubt to the story on which we have been discoursing) that is, did he not prove he was in a justified state, because his faith was productive of good works? This declarative justification in the sight of men, is what is directly to be understood in the words of the text; *Now know I*, says God, *that thou fearest me, since thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.* Not but that God knew it before; but this is spoken in condescension to our weak capacities, and plainly shews, that his offering up his son was accepted with God, as an evidence of the sincerity of his faith, and for this, was left on record to future ages. Hence then you may learn, whether you are blessed with, and are sons and daughters of, faithful Abraham. You say you believe; you talk of free grace, and free justification: You do well; the devils also believe and tremble. But has the faith which you pretend to, influenced your hearts, renewed your souls, and, like Abraham's, worked by love? Are your affections, like his, set on things above? Are you heavenly-minded, and, like him, do you confess yourselves strangers and pilgrims on the earth? In short, has your faith enabled you to overcome the world, and strengthened you to give up your Isaacs, your laughter, your most beloved lusts, friends, pleasures, and profits for God? If so, take the comfort of it; for justly may you say, "We know assuredly, that we do fear and love God, or ra-

"ther are loved of him." But if you are only talking believers, have only a faith of the head, and never felt the power of it in your hearts, however you may bolster yourselves up, and say, "we have Abraham for our father, or Christ is "our Saviour;" unless you get a faith of the heart, a faith working by love, you shall never sit with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, or Jesus Christ in the kingdom of heaven.

But I must draw one more inference, and with that I shall conclude.

Learn, O saints! from what has been said, to sit loose to all your worldly comforts; and stand ready prepared to part with every thing, when God shall require it at your hand. Some of you perhaps may have friends, who are to you as your own souls, and others may have children, in whose lives your own lives are bound up: All I believe have their Isaacs, their particular delights of some kind or other. Labour, for Christ's sake, labour, ye sons and daughters of Abraham, to resign them, daily in affection to God, that, when he shall require you really to sacrifice them, you may not confer with flesh and blood, any more than the blessed patriarch now before us. And as for you that have been in any measure tried like unto him, let his example encourage and comfort you. Remember, Abraham your father was tried so before you: Think, O think, of the happiness he now enjoys, and how he is incessantly thanking God for tempting and trying him when here below. Look up often by the eye of faith, and see him sitting with his dearly beloved Isaac in the world of spirits. Remember, it will be but a little while, and you shall sit with them also, and tell one another what God has done for your souls. There I hope to sit with you, and hear this story of his offering up his son from his own mouth, and

to praise the Lamb that sitteth upon the throne, for what he hath done for all our souls, for ever and ever.

S E R M O N V.

SAUL'S Conversion.

ACTS ix. 22.

But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.

IT is an undoubted truth, however it may seem a paradox to natural men, that *whosoever will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.* And therefore it is very remarkable, that our blessed Lord, in his glorious sermon on the Mount, after he had been pronouncing those blessed, who were poor in spirit, meek, pure in heart, and such like, immediately adds (and spends no less than three verses in this beatitude) *Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness sake.* No one ever was, or ever will be endowed with the forementioned graces in any degree, but he will be persecuted for it in a measure. There is an irreconcilable enmity between the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent. And if we are not of the world, but shew by our fruits that we are of the number of those whom Jesus Christ has chosen out of the world, for that very reason the world will hate us. As this is true of every particular Christian, so it is true of every Christian church in general. For some years past we have heard but little of a public persecution: Why? Because but little of the power of godliness has prevailed amongst all deno-

minations. The strong man armed has had full possession of most professors hearts, and therefore he has let them rest in a false peace. But we may assure ourselves, when Jesus Christ begins to gather in his elect in any remarkable manner, and opens an effectual door for preaching the everlasting gospel, persecution will flame out, and Satan and his emissaries will do their utmost (though all in vain) to stop the work of God. Thus it was in the first ages, thus it is in our days, and thus it will be till time shall be no more.

Christians, and Christian churches must then expect enemies. Our chief concern should be, to learn how to behave towards them in a Christian manner: For unless we take good heed to ourselves, we shall embitter our Spirits, and act unbecoming the followers of that Lord, *who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; and, as a lamb before his shearers is dumb, so opened he not his mouth.* But what motive shall we make use of to bring ourselves to this blessed Lamb-like temper? Next to the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit upon our hearts, I know of no consideration more conducive to teach us long-suffering towards our most bitter persecutors, than this, "That, for all as we know to the contrary, some of those very persons, who are now persecuting, may be chosen from all eternity by God, and hereafter called in time, to edify and build up the church of Christ.

The persecutor Saul, mentioned in the words of the text, (and whose conversion, God willing, I propose to treat on in the following discourse) is a noble instance of this kind.

I say, a persecutor, and that a bloody one: For see how he is introduced in the beginning of this chapter; *and Saul yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of our Lord, went unto*

the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of THIS WAY, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

And Saul yet breathing out. This implies that he had been a persecutor before. To prove which, we need only look back to the vii. chapter, where we shall find him so very remarkably active at Stephen's death, that the witnesses laid down their cloaths at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. He seems, though young, to be in some authority. Perhaps, for his zeal against the Christians, he was preferred in the church, and was allowed to sit in the great council or sanhedrim: For we are told, chap. viii. ver. 1. *That Saul was consenting unto his death;* and again, at ver. 3. he is brought in as exceeding all in his opposition; for thus speaks the evangelist, *as for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison.* One would have imagined, that this should have satisfied, at least abated the fury of this young zealot. No: being exceedingly mad against them, as he himself informs Agrippa, and having made havock of all in Jerusalem, he now is resolved to persecute the disciples of the Lord, even to strange cities; and therefore yet breathing out threatening. *Breathing out.* The words are very emphatical, and expressive of his bitter enmity. It was as natural to him now to threaten the Christians, as it was for him to breathe: He could scarce speak, but it was some threatenings against them. Nay, he not only breathed out threatenings, but slaughters also (and those who threaten, would also slaughter, if it were in their power) against the disciples of the Lord. Insatiable therefore as hell, finding he could not confute or stop the Christians by force of argument, he is resolved to do it by force of arms; and there-

fore went to the high priest (for there never was a persecution yet without a high priest at the head of it) and desired of him letters, issued out of his spiritual court, to the synagogues or ecclesiastical courts at Damascus, giving him authority, *that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem*, I suppose, to be arraigned and condemned in the high priest's court. Observe how he speaks of the Christians. Luke, who wrote the Acts, calls them *disciples of the Lord*, and Saul styles them *men and women of this way*. I doubt not but he represented them as a company of upstart enthusiasts, that had lately gotten into a new method or way of living; that would not be content with the temple-service, but they must be righteous overmuch, and have their private meetings or conventicles, and break bread, as they called it, from house to house, to the great disturbance of the established clergy, and to the utter subversion of all order and decency. I do not hear that the high priest makes any objection: No, he was as willing to grant letters, as Saul was to ask them; and wonderfully pleased within himself, to find he had such an active zealot to employ against the Christians.

Well then, a judicial process is immediately issued out, with the high priest's seal affixed to it. And now methinks I see the young persecutor finely equipped, and pleasing himself with thoughts, how triumphantly he should ride back with the *men and women of this way*, dragging after him to Jerusalem.

What a condition may we imagine the poor disciples at Damascus were in at this time! No doubt they had heard of Saul's imprisoning and making havock of the saints at Jerusalem, and we may well suppose were apprised of his design against them. I am persuaded this was a growing, because a trying,

time with these dear people. O how did they wrestle with God in prayer, beseeching him either to deliver them from, or give them grace sufficient to enable them to bear up under, the fury of their persecutors? The high priest doubtless with the rest of his reverend brethren, flattered themselves, that they should now put an effectual stop to this growing heresy, and waited with impatience for Saul's return.

But *He that sitteth in heaven laughs them to scorn, the Lord has them in derision.* And therefore, ver. 3. *As Saul journeyed, and came even near unto Damascus,* perhaps to the very gates, (our Lord permitting this, to try the faith of his disciples, and more conspicuously to baffle the designs of his enemies) suddenly (at mid-day, as he acquaints Agrippa) *there shined round about him a light from heaven, a light brighter than the sun; and he fell to the earth,* (why not into hell?) *and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, Why persecutest thou me?* The word is doubled, *Saul, Saul:* Like that of our Lord to Martha; *Martha, Martha;* or the prophet, *O earth, earth, earth!* Perhaps these words came like thunder to his soul. That they were spoken audibly, we are assured from ver. 7. His companions *heard the voice.* Our Lord now arrests the persecuting zealot, calling him by name; for the word never does us good, till we find it spoken to us in particular. *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?* Put the emphasis upon the word *why,* what evil have I done? Put it upon the word *persecutest,* why persecutest? I suppose Saul thought he was not persecuting; no, he was only putting the laws of the ecclesiastical court into execution; but Jesus, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, saw through the hypocrisy of his heart, that, notwithstanding his specious pretences, all this proceeded from a persecuting spirit, and secret enmity of heart against

God; and therefore says, *Why persecutest thou ME?* Put the emphasis upon the word ME, *Why persecutest thou ME?* Alas! Saul was not persecuting Christ, was he? He was only taking care to prevent innovations in the church, and bringing a company of enthusiasts to justice, who otherwise would overturn the established constitution. But Jesus says, *Why persecutest thou ME?* For what is done to Christ's disciples, he takes as done to himself, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. He that touches Christ's disciples, touches the apple of his eye; and they that persecute the followers of our Lord, would persecute our Lord himself, was he again to come and tabernacle amongst us.

I do not find that Saul gives any reason why he did persecute; no, he was struck dumb; as every persecutor will be, when Jesus Christ puts this same question to them at the terrible day of judgment. But being pricked at the heart, no doubt with a sense not only of this, but of all his other offences against the great God, he said, ver. 5. *Who art thou, Lord?* See how soon God can change the heart and voice of his most bitter enemies. Not many days ago, Saul was not only blaspheming Christ himself, but, as much as in him lay, compelling others to blaspheme also: But now, he who before was an impostor, is called *Lord*; *who art thou, Lord?* This admirably points out the way in which God's Spirit works upon the heart: It first powerfully convinces of sin, and of our damnable state; and then puts us upon inquiring after Jesus Christ. Saul being struck to the ground, or pricked to the heart, cries out after Jesus, *Who art thou, Lord?* As many of you that were never so far made sensible of your damnable state, as to be made feelingly to seek after Jesus Christ, were never yet truly convicted by, much less converted to, God. May the Lord, who struck Saul, effectually now strike

all my CHRIST-less hearers, and set them upon inquiring after Jesus, as their ALL in ALL! Saul said, *Who art thou, Lord?* And the Lord said, *I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest.* Never did any one inquire truly after Jesus Christ, but Christ made a saving discovery of himself to his soul. It should seem, our Lord appeared to him in person; for Ananias, afterwards, says, *the Lord who appeared to thee in the way which thou comest;* though this may only imply Christ's meeting him in the way; it is not much matter: It is plain Christ here speaks to him, and says, *I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest.* It is remarkable, how our Lord takes to himself the name of Jesus; for it is a name in which he delights: I am Jesus, a Saviour of my people, both from the guilt and power of their sins; a *Jesus, whom thou persecutest.* This seems to be spoken to convince Saul more and more of his sin: and I doubt not, but every word was sharper than a two-edged sword, and came like so many daggers to his heart: O, how did these words affect him! a Jesus! a Saviour! and yet I am persecuting him! This strikes him with horror; but then the word Jesus, though he was a persecutor, might give him some hope. However, our dear Lord, to convince Saul that he was to be saved by grace, and that he was not afraid of his power and enmity, tells him, *It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.* As much as to say, though he was persecuting, yet he could not overthrow the church of Christ: For he would sit as King upon his holy hill of Zion; the malice of men or devils should never be able to prevail against him.

Ver. 6. And he, *trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Those, who think Saul had a discovery of Jesus made to his heart before, think that this question is the result of his faith, and that he now desires to know what

he shall do, out of gratitude, for what the Lord had done for his soul; in this sense it may be understood, * and I have made use of it as an instance to prove, that faith will work by love; but perhaps it may be more agreeable to the context, if we suppose that Saul had only some distant discovery of Christ made to him, and not a full assurance of faith: For we are told, *he trembling and astonished*, trembling at the thoughts of his persecuting a Jesus, and astonished at his own vileness, and the infinite condescension of this Jesus, cries out, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Persons under soul-trouble, and sore conviction, would be glad to do any thing, or comply on any terms, to get peace with God. *Arise*, (says our Lord) *and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou shalt do.*

And here we will leave Saul a while, and see what is become of his companions. But what shall we say? God is a sovereign agent; his sacred Spirit bloweth when and where it listeth; *He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy.* Saul is taken, but, as far as we know to the contrary, his fellow-travellers are left to perish in their sins: For we are told, ver. 7. *That the men who journeyed with him stood, indeed, speechless, and bearing a confused voice;* I say, a *confused voice*, for so the word signifies, and must be so interpreted, in order to reconcile it with chap. xxii. ver. 9. where Saul, giving an account of these men, tells Agrippa, *They heard not the voice of him that spake to me.* They heard a voice, a confused noise, but not the articulate voice of him that spake to Saul, and therefore remained unconverted. For what are all ordinances, all, even the most extraordinary dispensations of providence, without Christ speaks to the soul in them? Thus it is now under the word preached: Many, like Saul's companions, are sometimes so struck with the out-

* See my Sermon on, *What think ye of Christ?*

goings of God appearing in the sanctuary, that they even stand speechless; they hear the preacher's voice, but not the voice of the Son of God, who, perhaps, at the same time is speaking effectually to many other hearts; this I have known often; and what shall we say to these things? O the depth of the sovereignty of God! It is past finding out. Lord, I desire to adore what I cannot comprehend. *Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight!*

But to return to Saul: The Lord bids him *arise* and go into the city; and we are told, ver. 3. that *Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, (he was so overpowered with the greatness of the light that shone upon them, that) he saw no man; but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus, that very city which was to be the place of his executing or imprisoning the disciples of the Lord. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.* But who can tell what horrors of conscience, what convulsion of soul, what deep and pungent convictions of sin he underwent during these three long days? It was this took away his appetite (for who can eat or drink when under a sense of the wrath of God for sin?) and, being to be greatly employed hereafter, he must be greatly humbled now; therefore the Lord leaves him three days groaning under the spirit of bondage, and buffeted, no doubt, with the fiery darts of the devil, that, being tempted like unto his brethren, he might be able hereafter, to succour those that were tempted. Had Saul applied to any of the blind guides of the Jewish church, under these circumstances, they would have said, he was mad, or going besides himself; as many carnal teachers and blind Pharisees now deal with, and so more and more distress, poor souls labouring under awakening convictions of their damnable state. But God often at our first awakenings, visits us with sore

trials, especially those who are, like Saul, to shine in the church, and to be used as instruments in bringing many sons to glory: Those who are 'to be highly exalted, must first be deeply humbled; and this I speak for the comfort of such, who may be now groaning under the spirit of bondage, and perhaps, like Saul, can neither eat nor drink; for I have generally observed, that those who have had the deepest convictions, have afterwards been favoured with the most precious communications, and enjoyed most of the divine presence in their souls. This was afterwards remarkably exemplified in Saul, who was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

But will the Lord leave his poor servant in this distress? No: his Jesus (though Saul persecuted him) promised (and he will perform) that it *should be told him what he must do.* And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias, and unto him, said the Lord, in a vision, Ananias; and he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. What a holy familiarity is there between Jesus Christ and regenerate souls! Ananias had been used to such love-visits, and therefore knew the voice of his Beloved. The Lord says, Ananias; Ananias says, *Behold, I am here, Lord.* Thus it is that Christ now, as well as formerly, often talks with his children at sundry times and after divers manners, as a man talketh with his friend.—But what has the Lord to say to Ananias?

Ver. 11. *And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street, which is called Streight, and enquire in the house of Judas, for one called Saul of Tarsus; (see here for your comfort, O children of the most high God, what notice Jesus Christ takes of the street, and the house where his own dear servants lodge) for behold, he prayeth; but why is this ushered in with the word behold? What, was it such a*

wonder, to hear that Saul was praying? Why, Saul was a Pharisee, and therefore, no doubt, fasted and made long prayers: And, since we are told that he profited above many of his equals, I doubt not but he was taken notice of for his gift in prayer; and yet it seems, that before these three days, Saul never prayed in his life; and why? Because, before these three days, he never felt himself a condemned creature: He was alive in his own opinion, because without a knowledge of the spiritual meaning of the law; he felt not a want of, and therefore, before now, cried not after a Jesus; and consequently, though he might have said or made a prayer (as many Pharisees do now-a-days) he never prayed a prayer; but now, behold! he *prayed indeed*; and this was urged as one reason why he was converted. None of God's children, as one observes, comes into the world still-born; prayer is the very breath of the new creature: And therefore, if we are prayerless, we are CHRIST-less; if we never had the spirit of supplication, it is a sad sign that we never had the spirit of grace in our souls: And you may be assured you never did pray, unless you have felt yourselves sinners, and seen the want of Jesus to be your Saviour. May the Lord, whom I serve in the gospel of his dear Son, prick you all to the heart, and may it be said of you all, as it was of Saul, Behold, they pray!

The Lord goes on to encourage Ananias to go to Saul: says he, ver. 12. *For he hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias, coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.* So that though Christ converted Saul immediately by himself, yet he will carry on the work, thus begun, by a minister. Happy they, who under soul-troubles have such experienced guides, and as well acquainted with Jesus Christ as Ananias was: You that have such, make much of and be thankful for them;

and you who have them not, trust in God; he will carry on his own work without them.

Doubtless, Ananias was a good man; but shall I commend him for his answer to our Lord? I commend him not: For says he, ver. 13. *Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon thy name.* I fear this answer proceeded from some relics of self-righteousness, as well as infidelity, that lay undiscovered in the heart of Ananias. *Arise,* (said our Lord) *and go into the street, which is called Streight, and inquire in the house of Judas, for one called Saul of Tarsus; for behold he prayeth!* One would think this was sufficient to satisfy him: but says Ananias, *Lord, I have heard by many of this man* (he seems to speak of him with much contempt; for even good men are apt to think too contemptuously of those who are yet in their sins) *how much evil he hath done to thy saints in Jerusalem: And here, he hath authority from the chief priests, to bind all that call upon thy name.* And what then, Ananias? Is any thing too hard for the Lord? Who made thee to differ? Could not he who converted thee, convert him also? Surely Ananias here forgets himself, or perhaps fears, lest this man, who had authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon Christ's name, should bind him also, if he went unto him; but the Lord silences all objections, with a *Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.* Here God stops his mouth immediately, by asserting his sovereignty, and preaching to him the doctrine of election. And the frequent conversion of notorious sinners to God, to me is one great proof, amongst a thousand others, of that precious, but too much exploded,

and sadly misrepresented, doctrine of God's electing love; for whence is it that such are taken, whilst thousands not near so vile, die senseless and stupid? All the answer that can be given, is, *They are chosen vessels; Go thy way, (says God) for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.* Observe what a close connection there is between doing and suffering for Christ. If any of my brethren in the ministry are present, let them hear what preferment we must expect, if we are called out to work remarkably for God: Not great prebendaries or bishopricks, but great sufferings for our Lord's name sake; these are the fruits of our labour; and he that will not contentedly suffer great things for preaching Christ; is not worthy of him. Suffering will be found to be the best preferment, when we are called to give an account of our ministry at the great day.

I do not hear, that Ananias quarrell'd with God concerning the doctrine of election; no, (O that all good men would, in this, learn of him!) *He went his way, and entered into the house; and put his hands on him, and said, Brother Saul;* just now it was *this man*; now it is *Brother Saul*: It is no matter what a man has been, if he be now a Christian; the same should be our brother, our sister, and mother: God blots out every convert's transgressions as with a thick cloud, and so should we; the more vile a man has been, the more should we love him when believing in Christ, because Christ will be more glorified on his behalf. I doubt not, but Ananias was wonderfully delighted to hear that so remarkable a persecutor was brought home to God! I am persuaded he felt his soul immediately united to him by love, and therefore addresses him not with, *Thou persecutor, Thou murderer*, that

camest to butcher me and my friends; but, *brother Saul*. It is remarkable that the primitive Christians much used the word brother and brethren; I know it is a term now much in reproach; but those who despise it, I believe would be glad to be of our brotherhood, when they see us sitting at the right-hand of the Majesty on high. *Brother Saul, the Lord (even Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest) hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost*. At this time, we may suppose, he laid his hands upon him. See the consequences.

Ver. 18. *Immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales, and he received sight forthwith*; not only bodily, but spiritual sight; he emerged as it were into a new world; he saw, and felt too, things unutterable; He felt a union of soul with God; he received the spirit of adoption; he could now, with a full assurance of faith, cry, *Abba, Father*. Now was he filled with the Holy Ghost; and had the love of God shed abroad in his heart; now were the days of his mourning ended; now was Christ formed in his soul; now he could give men and devils the challenge, knowing that Christ had justified him; now he saw the excellencies of Christ, and esteemed him the fairest among ten thousand.—You only know how to sympathize with the apostle in his joy, who, after a long night of bondage, have been set free by the Spirit, and have received joy in the Holy Ghost. May all that are now mourning, as Saul was, be comforted in like manner!

The scales then are now removed from the eyes of Saul's mind; Ananias has done that for him, under God; he must now do another office, baptize him, and so receive him into the visible church of Christ; a good proof to me of the necessity of baptism where it may be had; For I find here, as

well as elsewhere, that baptism is administered even to those who had received the Holy Ghost; Saul was convinced of this, and therefore arose and was baptized; and now it is time for him to recruit the outward man, which, by three days abstinence and spiritual conflicts, had been much impaired: We are therefore told, (ver. 19.) *when he had received meat, he was strengthened.*

But O, with what comfort did the apostle now eat his food! I am sure it was with singleness, I am persuaded also with gladness of heart; and why? He knew that he was reconciled to God; and, for my own part, did I not know how blind and stinty our hearts are by nature, I should wonder how any one could eat even his common food with any satisfaction, who has not some well-grounded hope of his being reconciled to God. Our Lord intimates thus much to us: For in his glorious prayer, after he has taught us to pray for our daily bread, immediately adds that petition, *Forgive us our trespasses*; as though our daily bread would do us no service, unless we were sensible of having the forgiveness of our sins.

To proceed: Saul hath received meat, and is strengthened; and whither will he go now? To see the brethren; *then was Saul certain days with the disciples that were at Damascus.* If we know and love Christ, we shall also love, and desire to be acquainted with the brethren of Christ: We may generally know a man by his company. And tho' all are not saints that associate with saints, (for tares will be always springing up amongst the wheat till the time of harvest) yet, if we never keep company, but are shy and ashamed of the despised children of God, it is a certain sign we have not yet experimentally learnt Jesus, or received him into our hearts. My dear friends, be not deceived; if we are friends to the Bridegroom, we

shall be friends to the children of the Bridegroom. Saul, as soon as he was filled with the Holy Ghost, *was certain days with the disciples that were at Damascus.*

But who can tell what joy these disciples felt when Saul came amongst them! I suppose holy Ananias introduced him. Methinks I see the once persecuting zealot, when they came to salute him with a holy kiss, throwing himself upon each of their necks, weeping over them with floods of tears, and saying, "O my brother, O my sister, Can you forgive me? Can you give such a wretch as I the right-hand of fellowship, who intended to drag you behind me bound unto Jerusalem!" Thus, I say, we may suppose Saul addressed himself to his fellow-disciples; and I doubt not but they were as ready to forgive and forget as Ananias was, and saluted him with the endearing title of brother Saul. Lovely was this meeting; so lovely, that it seemed Saul continued certain days with them, to communicate experiences, and to learn the way of God more perfectly; to pray for a blessing on his future ministry, and to praise Christ Jesus for what he had done for their souls. Saul, perhaps, had sat certain years at the feet of Gamaliel, but undoubtedly learnt more these certain days, than he had learnt before in all his life. It pleases me to think how this great scholar is transformed by the renewing of his mind: what a mighty change was here! That so great a man as Saul was, both as to his station in life, and internal qualifications, and such a bitter enemy to the Christians; for him, I say, to go and be certain days with the people of *this mad way*, and to sit quietly, and be taught of illiterate men, as many of these disciples we may be sure were, what a substantial proof was this of the reality of his conversion!

What a hurry and confusion may we suppose

the chief priests now were in! I warrant they were ready to cry out, what! is he also deceived? As for the common people, who knew not the law, and are accursed, for them to be carried away, is no such wonder; but for a man bred up at the feet of Gamaliel, for such a scholar, such an enemy to the cause as Saul; for him to be led away with a company of silly, deceived men and women, surely it is impossible: We cannot believe it. But Saul soon convinces them of the reality of his becoming a fool for Christ's sake: For straightway, instead of going to deliver the letters from the high priests, as they expected, in order to bring the disciples that were at Damascus bound to Jerusalem, *he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.* This was another proof of his being converted. He not only conversed with Christians in private, but he preached Christ publicly in the synagogues: Especially, he insisted on the divinity of our Lord, proving, notwithstanding his state of humiliation, that he was really the Son of God.

But why did Saul preach Christ thus? Because he had felt the power of Christ upon his own soul. And here is the reason why Christ is so seldom preached, and his divinity so slightly insisted on in our synagogues, because the generality of those that pretend to preach him, never felt a saving work of conversion upon their own souls. How can they preach, unless they are first taught of, and then sent by God? Saul did not preach Christ before he knew him; no more should any one else. An unconverted minister, though he could speak with the tongues of men and angels, will be but as a sounding brass and tinkling cymbal to those whose senses are exercised to discern spiritual things. Ministers that are unconverted, may talk and declaim of Christ, and prove from books that he is the Son of God; but they cannot

preach with the demonstration of the Spirit and with power, unless they preach from experience, and have had a proof of his divinity, by a work of grace wrought upon their own souls. God forgive those who lay hands on an unconverted man, knowing that he is such: I would not do it for a thousand worlds. Lord Jesus, keep thy own faithful servants pure, and let them not be then partakers of other mens sins!

Such an instance as was Saul's conversion, we may be assured, must make a great deal of noise; and, therefore, no wonder we are told, ver. 21. *But all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that destroyed them who called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?*

Thus it will be with all that appear publicly for Jesus Christ; and it is as impossible for a true Christian to be hid, as a city built upon a hill. Brethren, if you are faithful to, you must be reproached and have remarks made on you for Christ; especially if you have been remarkably wicked before your conversion. Your friends say, is not this he, or she, who a little while ago would run to as great excess of riot and vanity as the worst of us all? What has turned your brain? Or if you have been close, false, formal hypocrites, as Saul was, they will wonder that you should be so deceived, as to think you were not in a safe state before. No doubt, numbers were surpris'd to hear Saul, who was touching the law blameless, affirm that he was in a damnable condition (as in all probability he did) a few days before.

Brethren, you must expect to meet with many such difficulties as these. The scourge of the tongue is generally the first cross we are called to bear for the sake of Christ. Let not, therefore, this move you: It did not intimidate, no, it rather encouraged Saul.

Says the text, *But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.* Opposition never yet did, nor ever will hurt a sincere convert: Nothing like opposition to make the man of God perfect. None but a hireling, who careth not for the sheep, will be affrighted at the approach or barking of wolves. Christ's ministers are as bold as lions: It is not for such men as they to flee.

And therefore (that I may draw towards a conclusion) let the ministers and disciples of Christ learn from Saul, not to fear men or their revilings; but, like him, increase in strength, the more wicked men endeavour to weaken their hands. We cannot be Christians without being opposed: No; disciples in general must suffer; ministers in particular must suffer great things. But let not this move any of us from our steadfastness in the gospel: He that stood by and strengthened Saul, will also stand by and strengthen us: He is a God mighty to save all that put their trust in him. If we look up with an eye of faith, we, as well as the first martyr St. Stephen, may see Jesus standing at the right-hand of God, ready to assist and protect us. Though the Lord's seat is in heaven, yet he has respect to his saints in an especial manner, when suffering here on earth: Then the Spirit of Christ and of glory rests upon their souls. And, if I may speak my own experience, "I never enjoy more rich communications from God, than when despised and rejected of men for the sake of Jesus Christ." However little they may design it, my enemies are my greatest friends. What I most fear, is a calm; but the enmity which is in the hearts of natural men against Christ, will not suffer them to be quiet long: No; as I hope the work of God will increase, so the rage of men and devils will increase also. Let us put on, therefore, the whole armour of God:

Let us not fear the face of men: Let us fear him only who can destroy both body and soul in hell: I say unto you, let us fear him alone. You see how soon God can stop the fury of his enemies.

You have just now heard of a proud, powerful zealot stopped in his full career, struck down to the earth with a light from heaven, converted by the almighty power of efficacious grace, and thereupon zealously promoting, nay, resolutely suffering for, the faith, which once with threatenings and slaughters he endeavoured to destroy. Let this teach us to pity and pray for our Lord's most inveterate enemies. Who knows, but in answer thereunto, our Lord may give them repentance unto life? Most think, that Christ had respect to Stephen's prayer, when he converted Saul. Perhaps for this reason God suffers his adversaries to go on, that his goodness and power may shine more bright in their conversion.

But let not the persecutors of Christ take encouragement from this to continue in their opposition. Remember, though Saul was converted, yet the high priest, and Saul's companions, were left dead in trespasses and sins: And, if this should be your case, you will of all men be most miserable: For persecutors have the lowest place in hell. And, if Saul was struck to the earth by a light from heaven, how will you be able to stand before Jesus Christ, when he comes in terrible majesty to take vengeance on all those who have persecuted his gospel? Then the question, *Why persecuted thou me?* will cut you through and through. The secret enmity of your hearts shall be then detected before men and angels, and you shall be doomed to dwell in the blackness of darkness for evermore. Kiss the Son, therefore, lest he be angry: For even you may yet find mercy, if you believe on the Son of God: Though you persecute him, yet he will

be your Jesus. I cannot despair of any of you, when I find a Saul among the disciples at Damascus. What though your sins are as scarlet, the blood of Christ shall wash them as white as snow. Having much to be forgiven, despair not; only believe, and like Saul, of whom I have now been speaking, love much. He counted himself the chiefest sinner of all, and therefore laboured more abundantly than all. Who is there among you fearing the Lord? Whose hearts hath the Lord now opened to hearken to the voice of his poor unworthy servant! Surely the Lord will not let me preach in vain. Who is the happy soul that is this day to be washed in the blood of the Lamb? Will no poor sinner take encouragement from Saul to come to Jesus Christ? You are all thronging round, but which of you will touch the Lord Jesus? What a comfort will it be to Saul, and to your own souls, when you meet him in heaven, to tell him, that hearing of his, was a means, under God, of your conversion! Doubtless it was written for the encouragement of all poor returning sinners; he himself tells us so: *For in me God shewed all long-suffering, that I might be an example to them that should hereafter believe.* Was Saul here himself, he would tell you so, indeed he would; but being dead, by this account of his conversion, he yet speaketh. O that God may speak by it to your hearts! O that the arrows of God might this day stick fast in your souls, and you made to cry out, *Who art thou Lord?* Are there any such amongst you? Methinks I feel something of what this Saul felt, when he said, *I travail in birth again for you, till Christ be formed again in your hearts.* O come, come away to Jesus on whom Saul believed; and then I care not if the high priests issue out never so many writs, or injuriously drag me to a prison. The thoughts of being instrumental in saving you, will make me

sing praises even at midnight: And I know you will be my joy and crown of rejoicing, when I am delivered from this earthly prison, and meet you in the kingdom of God hereafter. *Now to God, &c.*

S E R M O N VI.

CHRIST the Believer's Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption.

1 COR. i. 30.

But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

OF all the verses in the book of God, this which I have now read to you, is, I believe, one of the most comprehensive: What glad tidings does it bring to believers! What precious privileges are they herein invested with! How are they here led to the fountain of them all, I mean, the love, the everlasting love of God the Father! *Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.*

Without referring you to the context, I shall from these words,

First, Point out to you the fountain, from which all those blessings flow, which the elect of God partake of in Jesus Christ, *who of God is made unto us.* And,

Secondly, I shall consider what these blessings are, *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.*

First, I would point out to you the fountain from which all those blessings flow, that the elect of God partake of in Jesus, *who of God is made unto us*, the Father, he it is who is spoken of here. Not as though Jesus Christ was not God also; but God the Father is the fountain of the Deity; and, if we consider Jesus Christ acting as Mediator, God the Father is greater than he; there was an eternal contract between the Father and the Son: *I have made a covenant with my chosen, and I have sworn unto David my servant*; now David was a type of Christ, with whom the Father made a covenant, that if he would obey and suffer, and make himself a sacrifice for sin, he should see his seed he should prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hands. This compact our Lord refers to, in that glorious prayer recorded in the 17th chapter of John; and therefore he prays for, or rather demands with a full assurance, all that were given to him by the Father: *Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am*. For this same reason the apostle breaks out into praises of God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; for he loved the elect with an everlasting love, or, as our Lord expresses it, *before the foundation of the world*; and therefore, to shew them to whom they were beholden for their salvation, our Lord, in the 25th of Matthew, represents himself, saying, *Come, ye blessed children of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*. And thus, in reply to the mother of Zebedee's children, he says, *It is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of the Father*. The apostle therefore, when here speaking of the Christian's privileges, lest they should sacrifice to their own drag, or think their salvation was owing to their own faithfulness, or improvement of their own free-will, reminds them to look back on the

everlasting love of God the Father; *who of God is made unto us, &c.*

Would to God, this point of doctrine was considered more, and people were more studious of the covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son! we should not then have so much disputing against the doctrine of election, or hear it condemned (even by good men) as a doctrine of devils. For my own part, I cannot see how true humbleness of mind can be attained without a knowledge of it; and though I will not say, that every one who denies election is a bad man, yet I will say, with that sweet singer, Mr. Trail, it is a very bad sign: Such a one, whoever he be, I think cannot truly know himself: For, if we deny election, we must, partly at least, glory in ourselves; but our redemption is so ordered, that no flesh should glory in the divine presence; and hence it is, that the pride of man opposes this doctrine, because according to this doctrine, and no other, *be that glories must glory only in the Lord.* But what shall I say? Election is a mystery that shines with such resplendent brightness, that, to make use of the words of one who has drank deeply of electing love, it dazzles the weak eyes even of some of God's dear children; however, though they know it not, all the blessings they receive, all the privileges they do or will enjoy, through Jesus Christ, flow from the everlasting love of God the Father: *But of him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.*

Secondly, I come to shew what these blessings are, which are here, through Christ, made over to the elect. And

1. *First*, Christ is made to them *wisdom*; but wherein does true wisdom consist? Was I to ask some of you, perhaps you would say, in indulging the lust of the flesh, and saying to your souls, eat,

drink, and be merry; but this is only the wisdom of brutes; they have as good a gust and relish for sensual pleasures, as the greatest epicure on earth. Others would tell me true wisdom consisted in adding house to house, and field to field, and calling lands after their own names; but this cannot be true wisdom; for riches often take to themselves wings and fly away, like an eagle towards heaven. Even *Wisdom itself* assures us, *that a man's life doth not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses*; vanity, vanity, all these things are vanity; for, if riches leave not the owner; the owners must soon leave them; *for rich men must also die, and leave their riches for others*; their riches cannot procure them redemption from the grave, whither we are all hastening apace.

But perhaps you despise riches and pleasure, and therefore place wisdom in the knowledge of books: But it is possible for you to tell the numbers of the stars, and call them all by their names, and yet be mere fools; learned men are not always wise; nay, our common learning, so much cried up, makes men only so many accomplished fools; to keep you therefore no longer in suspense, and withal to humble you, I will send you to an heathen to school, to learn what true wisdom is: *Know thyself*, was a saying of one of the wise men of Greece; this is certainly true wisdom, and this is that wisdom spoken of in the text, and which Jesus Christ has made to all elect sinners; they are made to know themselves, so as not to think more highly of themselves, than they ought to think. Before they were darkness; now they are light in the Lord; and in that light they see their own darkness; they now bewail themselves as fallen creatures by nature, dead in trespasses and sins, sons and heirs of hell, and children of wrath; they now see that all their righteousnesses are but as filthy rags; that there is no health

in their souls; that they are poor and miserable, blind, and naked; and that there is no name given under heaven, whereby they can be saved, but that of Jesus Christ. They see the necessity of closing with a Saviour, and behold the wisdom of God in appointing him to be a Saviour; they are also made willing to accept of salvation upon our Lord's own terms, and to receive him as their all in all: Thus Christ is made to them *wisdom*.

2. *Secondly, Righteousness.* *Who of God is made unto us, wisdom, righteousness;* Christ's whole personal righteousness is made over to and accounted their's. Being enabled to lay hold on Christ by faith, God the Father blots out their transgressions, as with a thick cloud; their sins, and their iniquities he remembers no more; they are made the righteousness of God in Jesus, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. In one sense, God now sees no sin in them; the whole covenant of works is fulfilled in them; they are actually justified, acquitted, and looked upon as righteous in the sight of God; they are perfectly accepted in the Beloved; they are compleat in him; the flaming sword of God's wrath, which before moved every way, is now removed, and free access given to the tree of life; they are enabled now to reach out the arm of faith, and pluck and live for evermore. Hence it is that the apostle, under a sense of this blessed privilege, breaks out into this triumphant language; *it is Christ that justifies, who is he that condemns?* Does sin condemn? Christ's righteousness delivers believers from the guilt of it: Christ is their Saviour, and is become a propitiation for their sins: Who therefore shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? Does the law condemn? By having Christ's righteousness imputed to them, they are dead to the law, as a covenant of works; Christ has fulfil-

led it for them, and in their stead. Does death threaten them? They need not fear: The sting of death is sin, the strength of sin is the law; but God has given them the victory, by imputing to them the righteousness of the Lord Jesus.

And what a privilege is here! Well might the angels at the birth of Christ, say to the humble shepherds, *Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy; unto you that believe in Christ, a Saviour is born.* And well may they rejoice at the conversion of poor sinners: For the Lord is their righteousness: They have peace with God, through faith in Christ's blood, and shall never enter into condemnation. O believers! (for this discourse is intended in a special manner for you) lift up your heads; *Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice.* Christ is made to you of God, righteousness, what then should you fear? you are made the righteousness of God in him; you may be called, *The Lord our righteousness.* Of what then should you be afraid? What shall separate you henceforward from the love of Christ? "Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, I am persuaded, neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate you from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," who of God is made unto you righteousness.

This is a glorious privilege, but this is only the beginning of the happiness of believers: For,

3. *Thirdly*, Christ is not only made to them righteousness, but *sanctification*. By sanctification, I do not mean a bare hypocritical attendance on outward ordinances, (though rightly informed Christians will think it their duty and privilege constantly to attend on all outward ordinances.)

Nor do I mean by sanctification, a bare outward reformation, and a few transient convictions, or a little legal sorrow; for all this an un sanctified man may have; but, by sanctification, I mean a total renovation of the whole man; by the righteousness of Christ, believers become legally, by sanctification they are made spiritually, alive; by one they are entitled to, by the other they are made meet for, glory. They are sanctified therefore throughout, in spirit, soul, and body.

Their understandings, which were before dark, now become light in the Lord; and their wills, before contrary to, now become one with, the will of God: Their affections are now set on things above; their memory is now filled with divine things; their natural consciences are now enlightened; their members, which were before instruments of uncleanness, and of iniquity unto iniquity, are now instruments of righteousness and true holiness; in short, they are new creatures; "old things are passed away, all things are become new," in their hearts; sin has now no longer dominion over them; they are freed from the power, though not the indwelling and being, of it; they are holy both in heart and life, in all manner of conversation; they are made partakers of a divine nature; and from Jesus Christ, they receive grace for grace; and every grace that is in Christ, is copied and transcribed into their souls; they are transformed into his likeness; he is formed within them; they dwell in him, and he in them; they are led by the Spirit, and bring forth the fruits thereof; they know that Christ is their Emmanuel, God with and in them; they are living temples of the Holy Ghost. And therefore, being a holy habitation unto the Lord, the whole Trinity dwells and walks in them; even here, they sit together with Christ in heavenly places, and are vitally united to him, their head, by a living faith;

their Redeemer, their Maker, is their Husband; they are flesh of his flesh, bone of his bone; they talk, they walk with him, as a man talketh and walketh with his friend; in short, they are one with Christ, even as Jesus Christ and the Father are one.

Thus is Christ made to believers *sanctification*. And O what a privilege is this! To be changed from beasts into saints, and from a devilish, to be made partakers of a divine nature; to be translated from the kingdom of Satan, into the kingdom of God's dear Son! To put off the old man, which is corrupt, and to put on the new man, which is created after God, in righteousness and true holiness. O what an unspeakable blessing is this! I almost stand amazed at the contemplation thereof. Well might the apostle exhort believers to rejoice in the Lord; indeed they have reason always to rejoice, yea, to rejoice on a dying bed; for the kingdom of God is in them; they are changed from glory to glory, even by the Spirit of the Lord: well may this be a mystery to the natural, for it is a mystery even to the spiritual man himself, a mystery which he cannot fathom. Does it not often dazzle your eyes, O ye children of God, to look at your own brightness, when the candle of the Lord shines out, and your Redeemer lifts up the light of his blessed countenance upon your souls? Are not you astonished, when you feel the love of God shed abroad in your hearts, by the Holy Ghost, and God holds out the golden sceptre of his mercy, and bids you ask what you will, and it shall be given you? Does not that peace of God, which keeps and rules your hearts, surpass the utmost limits of your understandings? And is not the joy you feel unspeakable? Is it not full of glory? I am persuaded it is; and in your secret communion, when the Lord's love flows in upon your souls, you are as it were swallowed up in, or,

to use the apostle's phrase, *filled with all the fulness of God*. Are not you ready to cry out with Solomon, *And will the Lord, indeed, dwell thus with men? How is it that we should be thus thy sons and daughters, O Lord God Almighty!*

If you are children of God, and know what it is to have fellowship with the Father and the Son; if you walk by faith, and not by sight; I am assured this is frequently the language of your hearts.

But look forward, and see an unbounded prospect of eternal happiness lying before thee, O believer! What thou hast already received, are only the first fruits, like the cluster of grapes brought out of the land of Canaan; only an earnest and pledge of yet infinitely better things to come: The harvest is to follow; thy grace is hereafter to be swallowed up in glory. Thy great Joshua, and merciful High Priest, shall administer an abundant entrance to thee into the land of promise, that rest which awaits the children of God: For Christ is not only made to believers, *wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification*, but also *redemption*.

But, before we enter upon the explanation and contemplation of this privilege,

First, Learn hence the great mistake of those writers, and clergy, who, notwithstanding they talk of sanctification and inward holiness, (as indeed sometimes they do, though in a very loose and superficial manner) yet they generally make it the *cause*, whereas they should consider it as the *effect*, of our justification. Of him *are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, (and then) sanctification*. For Christ's righteousness, or that which Christ has done in our stead without us, is the sole cause of our acceptance in the sight of God, and of all holiness wrought in us: To this, and not to the light within, or any thing wrought within, should poor sinners seek for justification in the sight

of God: for the sake of Christ's righteousness alone, and not any thing wrought in us, does God look favourably upon us; our sanctification at best, in this life, is not compleat: Though we are delivered from the power, we are not freed from the in-being of sin; but not only the dominion, but the in-being of sin, is forbidden by the perfect law of God: For it is not said, *thou shalt not give way to lust, but, thou shalt not lust*. So that whilst the principle of lust remains in the least degree in our hearts, though we are otherwise never so holy, yet we cannot, on account of that, hope for acceptance with God. We must first, therefore, look for a righteousness without us, even the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ: For this reason the apostle mentions it, and puts it before sanctification in the words of the text. And whosoever teacheth any other doctrine, doth not preach the truth as it is in Jesus.

Secondly, From hence also, the Antinomians and formal hypocrites may be confuted, who talk of Christ without, but know nothing, experimentally, of a work of sanctification wrought within them. Whatever they may pretend to, since Christ is not in them, the Lord is not their righteousness, and they have no well-grounded hope of glory: For though sanctification is not the cause, yet it is the effect of our acceptance with God; *who of God is made unto us righteousness and sanctification*. He therefore, that is really in Christ, is a new creature; it is not going back to a covenant of works, to look into our hearts, and, seeing that they are changed and renewed, from thence form a comfortable and well-grounded assurance of the safety of our states: No, but this is what we are directed to in scripture; by our bringing forth the fruits, we are to judge whether or no we ever did truly partake of the Spirit of God. *We know, (says John) that we are*

passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. And however we may talk of Christ's righteousness, and exclaim against legal preachers; yet, if we are not holy in heart and life, if we are not sanctified and renewed by the Spirit in our minds, we are self-deceivers, we are only formal hypocrites: For we must not put asunder what God has joined together; we must keep the medium between the two extremes; not insist so much on the one hand upon Christ without, as to exclude Christ within, as an evidence of our being his, and as a preparation for future happiness; nor on the other hand, so depend on inherent righteousness or holiness wrought in us, as to exclude the righteousness of Jesus Christ without us. But;

4. *Fourthly*, Let us now go on, and take a view of the other link, or rather the end, of the believer's golden chain of privileges, redemption. But we must look very high; for the top of it, like Jacob's ladder, reaches heaven, where all believers will ascend, and be placed at the right hand of God. *Who of God is made unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.*

This is a golden chain indeed! And, what is best of all, not one link can ever be broken asunder from another. Was there no other text in the book of God, this single one sufficiently proves the final perseverance of true believers: For never did God yet justify a man, whom he did not sanctify; nor sanctify one whom he did not completely redeem and glorify; no; as for God, his way, his work, is perfect; he always carried on and finished the work he begun; thus it was in the first, so it is in the new creation; when God says, *let there be light*, there is light, that shines more and more unto the perfect day, when believers enter into their eternal rest, as God entered into his. Those whom God has justified, he has in effect glorified: For

as a man's worthiness was not the cause of God's giving him Christ's righteousness, so neither shall his unworthiness be a cause of his taking it away; God's gifts and callings are without repentance; and I cannot think, they are clear in the notion of Christ's righteousness, who deny the final perseverance of the saints; I fear, they understand justification in that low sense, which I understood it in a few years ago, as implying no more than remission of sins: But it not only signifies remission of sins past, but also a federal right to all good things to come. If God has given us his only Son, how shall he not with him freely give us all things? Therefore, the apostle, after he says, *who of God is made unto us righteousness*, does not say, perhaps he may be made to us sanctification and redemption; but, he is made: For there is an eternal, indissoluble connection between these blessed privileges. As the obedience of Christ is imputed to believers, so his perseverance in that obedience is to be imputed to them also: And it argues great ignorance of the covenant of grace and redemption to object against it.

By the word *redemption*, we are to understand, not only a compleat deliverance from all evil, but also a full enjoyment of all good both in body and soul: I say, both in body and soul; for the Lord is also for the body; the bodies of the saints in this life are temples of the Holy Ghost; God makes a covenant with the dust of believers; after death, though worms destroy them, yet, even in their flesh shall they see God. I fear, indeed, there are some Sadducees in our days, or at least heretics, who say, either, that there is no resurrection of the body, or that the resurrection is past already, namely, in our regeneration: Hence it is, that our Lord's coming in the flesh, at the day of judgment is denied; and consequently, we must

throw aside the sacrament of the Lord's supper. For why should we remember the Lord's death until he comes to judgment, when he is already come to judge our hearts, and will not come a second time? But all this is only the reasoning of unlearned, unstable men, who certainly know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm. That we must follow our Lord in the regeneration, be partakers of a new birth, and that Christ must come into our hearts, we freely confess, and we hope, when speaking of these things, we speak no more than what we know and feel: But then it is plain, that Jesus Christ will come, hereafter, to judgment, and that he ascended into heaven with the body which he had here on earth; for says he, after his resurrection, *handle me, and see; a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see me have.* And it is plain, that Christ's resurrection was an earnest of ours: For says the apostle, *Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept;* and as in Adam all die, and are subject to mortality; so all that are in Christ, the second Adam, who represented believers as their federal head, shall certainly be made alive, or rise again with their bodies at the last day.

Here then, O believers! is one, though the lowest, degree of that redemption which you are to be partakers of hereafter; I mean, the redemption of your bodies: For this corruptible must put on incorruption, this mortal must put on immortality. Your bodies, as well as souls, were given to Jesus Christ by the Father: they have been companions in watching, and fasting, and praying: Your bodies therefore, as well as souls, shall Jesus Christ raise up at the last day. Fear not therefore, O believers, to look into the grave; for to you it is no other than a consecrated dormitory, where your bodies shall sleep quietly until the morning of the

resurrection; when the voice of the archangel shall sound, and the trump of God give the general alarm, *Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment*; earth, air, fire, water, shall give up your scattered atoms, and both in body and soul shall you be ever with the Lord. I doubt not but many of you are groaning under crazy bodies, and complain often that the mortal body weighs down the immortal soul; at least this is my case; but let us have a little patience, and we shall be delivered from our earthly prisons; ere long, these tabernacles of clay shall be dissolved, and we shall be clothed with our house which is from heaven; hereafter, our bodies shall be spiritualized, and shall be so far from hindering our souls through weakness, that they shall become strong; so strong, as to bear up under an exceeding and eternal weight of glory; others again may have deformed bodies, emaciated also with sickness, and worn out with labour and age; but wait a little, until your blessed change by death comes; then your bodies shall be renewed and made glorious, like unto Christ's glorious body: Of which we may form some faint idea, from the account given us of our Lord's transfiguration on the mount, when it is said, *His raiment became bright and glistering, and his face brighter than the sun*. Well then may a believer break out into the apostle's triumphant language, *O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory!*

But what is the redemption of the body, in comparison of the redemption of the better part, our souls? I must, therefore, say to you believers, as the angel said to John, *Come up higher*, and let us take as clear a view as we can, at such a distance, of the redemption Christ has purchased for, and will shortly put you in actual possession of. Already you are justified, already you are sanctified, and thereby freed from the guilt and dominion of

sin: But, as I have observed, the being and indwelling of sin yet remains in you; God sees it proper to leave some Amalekites in the land, to keep his Israel in action. The most perfect Christian, I am persuaded, must agree, according to one of our articles, "that the corruption of nature remains even in the regenerate; that the flesh lusteth always against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh." So that believers cannot do things for God with that perfection they desire; This grieves their righteous souls day by day, and, with the holy apostle, makes them to cry out, *Who shall deliver us from the body of this death!* I thank God, our Lord Jesus Christ will, but not compleatly before the day of our dissolution; then will the very being of sin be destroyed, and an eternal stop put to inbred, indwelling corruption. And is not this a great redemption? I am sure believers esteem it so: For there is nothing grieves the heart of a child of God so much, as the remains of indwelling sin. Again, believers are often in heaviness through manifold temptations; God sees that it is needful and good for them so to be; and though they may be highly favoured, and wrapt up in communion with God, even to the third heavens, yet a messenger of Satan is often sent to buffet them, lest they should be puffed up with the abundance of revelations. But be not weary, be not faint in your minds: The time of your compleat redemption draweth nigh. In heaven the wicked one shall cease from troubling you, and your weary souls shall enjoy an everlasting rest; his fiery darts cannot reach those blisful regions: Satan will never come any more to appear with, disturb, or accuse the sons of God, when once the Lord Jesus Christ shuts the door. Your righteous souls are now grieved, day by day, at the ungodly conversation of the wicked; tares now grow up among the wheat; wolves come in sheeps cloth-

ing: But the redemption spoken of in the text will free your souls from all anxiety on these accounts; hereafter you shall enjoy a perfect communion of saints; nothing that is unholy or un-sanctified shall enter into the holy of holies, which is prepared for you above: This, and all manner of evil whatsoever, you shall be delivered from, when your redemption is hereafter made compleat in heaven; not only so, but you shall enter into the full enjoyment of all good. It is true all saints will not have the same degree of happiness, but all will be as happy as their hearts can desire. Believers, you shall judge evil, and familiarly converse with good, angels: You shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the spirits of just men made perfect; and, to sum up all your happiness in one word, you shall see God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and, by seeing God, be more and more like unto him, and pass from glory to glory, even to all eternity.

But I must stop: The glories of the upper world crowd in so fast upon my soul, that I am lost in the contemplation of them. Brethren, the redemption spoken of is unutterable; we cannot here find it out; eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the hearts of the most holy men living, to conceive how great it is. Was I to entertain you whole ages with an account of it, when you come to heaven you must say, with the Queen of Shebah, *Not half, no, not one thousandth part was told us.* All we can do here, is to go upon mount Pisgah, and by the eye of faith, take a distant view of the promised land: We may see it, as Abraham did Christ, afar off, and rejoice in it; but here we only know in part. Blessed be God, there is a time coming, when we shall know God, even as we are known, and God be all in all. "Lord Jesus, accomplish

"the number of thine elect! Lord Jesus, hasten
"thy kingdom!"

And now, where are the scoffers of these last days, who count the lives of Christians to be madness, and their end to be without honour? Unhappy men! you know not what you do. Were your eyes open, and had you senses to discern spiritual things, you would not speak all manner of evil against the children God, but you would esteem them as the excellent ones of the earth, and envy their happiness: Your souls would hunger and thirst after it: You also would become fools for Christ's sake. You boast of wisdom; so did the philosophers of Corinth: But your wisdom is the foolishness of folly in the sight of God. What will your wisdom avail you, if it does not make you wise unto salvation? Can you, with all your wisdom, propose a more consistent scheme to build your hopes of salvation on, than what has been now laid down before you? Can you, with all the strength of natural reason, find out a better way of acceptance with God, than by the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ? Is it right to think your own works can in any measure deserve or procure it? If not, why will you not believe in him? Why will you not submit to his righteousness? Can you deny that you are fallen creatures? Do not you find that you are full of disorders, and that these disorders make you unhappy? Do not you find that you cannot change your own hearts? Have you not resolved many and many a time, and have not your corruptions yet dominion over you? Are you not bond-slaves to your lusts, and led captive by the devil at his will? Why then will you not come to Christ for sanctification? Do you not desire to die the death of the righteous, and that your future state may be like theirs? I am persuaded you cannot bear the thoughts of being annihilated, much

less of being miserable for ever. Whatever you may pretend, if you speak truth, you must confess, that conscience breaks in upon you in your more sober intervals whether you will or not, and even constrains you to believe, that hell is no painted fire. And why then will you not come to Christ? He alone can procure you everlasting redemption. Haste, haste away to him, poor beguiled sinners. You lack wisdom; ask it of Christ. Who knows but he may give it you? He is able: For he is the wisdom of the Father; he is that wisdom which was from everlasting. You have no righteousness; away, therefore, to Christ: He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. You are unholy; flee to the Lord Jesus: He is full of grace and truth; and of his fulness all may receive that believe in him. You are as afraid to die; let this drive you to Christ: He has the keys of death and hell; in him is plenteous redemption; he alone can open the door which leads to everlasting life. Let not, therefore, the deceived reasoner boast any longer of his pretended reason. Whatever you may think, it is the most unreasonable thing in the world not to believe on Jesus Christ, whom God hath sent. Why, why will you die? Why will you not come unto him, that you may have life? Ho! every one that thirsteth, come unto the waters of life and drink freely: Come, buy without money and without price. Were these blessed privileges in the text to be purchased with money, you might say, we are poor, and cannot buy: Or, were they to be conferred only on sinners of such a rank or degree, then you might say, how can such sinners as we expect to be so highly favoured? But they are to be freely given of God to the worst of sinners. To us, says the apostle; to me a persecutor, to you Corinthians, who were unclean, drunkards, covetous persons, idolaters. Therefore,

each poor sinner may say then, Why not unto me? Has Christ but one blessing? What if he has blessed millions already, by turning them away from their iniquities; yet, he still continues the same: He lives for ever to make intercession, and therefore will bless you, even you also. Though, Esau-like, you have been profane, and hitherto despised your heavenly Father's birth-right; even now, if you believe, Christ will be made to you of God, *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.*

But I must turn again to believers, for whose instruction, as I observed before, this discourse was particularly intended. You see, brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, what great blessings are treasured up for you in Jesus Christ your head, and what you are entitled to by believing on his name. take heed, therefore, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. Think often how highly you are favoured; and remember, you have not chosen Christ, but Christ hath chosen you. Put on (as the elect of God) humbleness of mind, and glory, but let it be only in the Lord: For you have nothing but what you have received of God. By nature, ye were as foolish, as legal, as unholy, and in as damnable a condition as others. Be pitiful, therefore, be courteous; and, as sanctification is a progressive work, beware of thinking you have already attained. Let him that is holy, be holy still; knowing, that he who is most pure in heart, shall hereafter enjoy the clearest vision of God. Let indwelling sin be your daily burden; and not only bewail and lament, but see that you subdue it daily by the power of divine grace; and look up to Jesus continually to be the finisher, as well as author of your faith. Build not on your own faithfulness, but on God's unchangeableness. Take heed of thinking you stand by the power of your own free-will. The everlasting love of God the Father must be your only hope and con-

olation: Let this support you under all trials. Remember that God's gifts and callings are without repentance; that Christ having once loved you, will love you to the end. Let this constrain you to obedience, and make you long and look for that blessed time, when he shall not only be your wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, but also compleat and everlasting redemption. *Glory be to God in the highest!*

S E R M O N VII.

The Pharisee and Publican.

LUKE xviii. 14.

I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: For every one that exalteth himself, shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.

THOUGH there be some who dare to deny the Lord Jesus, and disbelieve the revelation he has been pleased to give us, and thereby bring upon themselves swift destruction; yet I would charitably hope there are but few, if any such among you, to whom I am now to preach the kingdom of God. Was I to ask you, "how you expect to be justified in the sight of an offended God?" I suppose you would answer, only for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. But, was I to come more home to your consciences, I fear most would make the Lord Jesus but in part their Saviour, and go about, as it were, to establish a righteousness of

their own. And this is not thinking contrary to the rules of Christian charity: For we are all self-righteous by nature; it is as natural for us to turn back to a covenant of works, as for the sparks to fly upwards. We have had so many legal and so few free-grace preachers, for these many years, that most professors now seem to be settled upon their lees, and rather deserve the title of Pharisees than Christians.

Thus it was with the generality of the people during the time of our Lord's public ministration: And therefore, in almost all his discourses, he preached the gospel to poor sinners, and denounced terrible woes against proud self-justiciaries. The parable to which the words of the text belong, looks both these ways: For the evangelist informs us, (ver. 9.) that our Lord *spake it unto certain who trusted in themselves, that they were righteous, and despised others*. And a notable parable it is; a parable worthy your most serious attention. *He that hath ears to hear let him hear*, what Jesus Christ speaks to all visible professors in it.

Ver. 10. *Two men went up to the temple to pray, (and never two men of more opposite characters) the one a Pharisee, and the other a Publican*. The Pharisees were the strictest sect among the Jews. I was of the strictest sect of the Pharisees, says Paul. They prayed often; not only so, but they made long prayers; and, that they might appear extraordinary devout, they would pray at the corners of the street, where two ways met, that people going or coming, both ways, might see them. *They made broad (as our Lord informs us) the borders of their phylacteries*, they had pieces of parchment sown to their long robes, on which some parts of the scripture were written, that people might from thence infer, that they were lovers of the law of God. They were so very punctual

and exact in outward purifications, that they washed at their going out and coming in. They held the washing of pots, brazen vessels and tables, and many other such-like things they did. They were very zealous for the traditions of the fathers, and for the observation of the rites and ceremonies of the church, notwithstanding they frequently made void the law of God by their traditions. And they were so exceedingly exact in the outward observation of the Sabbath, that they condemned our Lord for making a little clay with his spittle; and called him a sinner, and said, he was not of God, because he had given sight to a man born blind, on the Sabbath-day. For these reasons they were had in high veneration among the people, who were sadly misled by these blind guides: They had the uppermost places in the synagogues, and greetings in the market-places (which they loved dearly) and were called of men, Rabbi; in short, they had such a reputation for piety, that it became a proverb among the Jews, that if there were but two men sayed, the one of them must be a Pharisee.

As for the Publicans, it was not so with them. It seems they were sometimes Jews, or at least proselytes of the gate; for we find the one here coming up to the temple; but for the generality, I am apt to think they were Gentiles; for they were gatherers of the Roman taxes, and used to amass much wealth (as appears by the confession of Zaccheus, one of the chief of them) by wronging men by false accusations. They were so universally infamous, that our Lord himself tells his disciples, the excommunicated man should be to them as a Heathen-man, or a Publican. And the Pharisees thought it a sufficient impeachment of our Lord's character, that he was a friend to Publicans and sinners, and went to sit down with them at meat.

But, however they disagreed in other things, they agreed in this, that public worship is a duty incumbent upon all: For they both came up to the temple. The very Heathens were observers of temple-worship. We have very early notice of mens sacrificing to, and calling upon the name of the Lord, in the Old Testament; and I find it no where contradicted in the New. Our Lord, and his apostles, went up to the temple; and we are commanded by the apostle, *not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together*, as the manner of too many is in our days; and such too, as would have us think well of them, though they seldom or never tread the courts of the Lord's house. But, though our devotions begin in our closets, they must not end there. And, if people never shew their devotions abroad, I must suspect they have little or none at home. *Two men went up to the temple.* And what went they thither for? Not (as multitudes amongst us do) to make the house of God a house of merchandize, or turn it into a den of thieves; much less to ridicule the preacher, or disturb the congregation. No, they came to the temple, says our Lord, *to pray*. Thither should the tribes of God's spiritual Israel go up, to talk with and pour out their hearts before the mighty God of Jacob.

Two men went up to the temple to pray. I fear one of them forgot his errand. I have often been at a loss what to call the Pharisee's address; It certainly does not deserve the name of a prayer: He may rather be said to come to the temple to boast, than to pray; for I do not find one word of confession of his original guilt; not one single petition for pardon of his past actual sins, or for grace to help and assist him for the time to come: He only brings in God, as it were, a reckoning of his per-

formances, and does that, which no flesh can justly do, I mean, glory in his presence.

Ver. 11. *The Pharisee stood, and prayed thus with himself; God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican.*

Our Lord first takes notice of his posture; *The Pharisee stood*, he is not to be condemned for that; for standing, as well as kneelling, is a proper posture for prayer. When you *stand praying*, says our Lord; though sometimes our Lord kneelled, nay, lay flat on his face upon the ground; his apostles also kneelled, as we read in the Acts, which has made me wonder at some, who are so bigotted to standing in family as well as public prayer, that they will not kneel, notwithstanding all kneel that are around them. I fear there is something of the Pharisee in this conduct. Kneelling and standing are indifferent, if the knee of the soul be bent, and the heart upright towards God. We should study not to be particular in indifferent things, lest we offend weak minds. What the Pharisee is remarked for, is his *standing by himself*: For the words may be rendered, he stood *by himself*, upon some eminent place, at the upper part of the temple, near the holy of holies, that the congregation might see what a devout man he was: Or it may be understood as we read it, he prayed by himself, or of himself, out of his own heart; he did not pray by form; it was an extempore prayer: For there are many Pharisees that pray and preach too extempore. I do not see why these may not be acquired, as well as other arts and sciences. A man, with a good elocution, ready turn of thought, and good memory, may repeat his own or other mens sermons, and by the help of a Wilkins or Henry, may pray seemingly excellently well, and yet not have the least grain of true grace in his heart; and I speak

this, not to cry down extempore prayer, or to discourage those dear souls who really pray by the Spirit; I only would hereby give a word of reproof to those who are so bigotted to extempore prayer, that they condemn, at least judge, all that use forms, as though not so holy and heavenly, as others who pray without them. Alas! this is wrong. Not every one that prays extempore is a spiritual, nor every one that prays with a form, a formal man. Let us not judge one another; let not him that uses a form, judge him that prays extempore, on that account; and let not him that prays extempore, despise him who uses a form. *The Pharisee stood, and prayed thus by himself.* Which may signify also praying inwardly in his heart; for there is a way (and that an excellent one too) of praying when we cannot speak; thus Anna prayed when she spoke not aloud, only her lips moved. Thus God says to Moses, *Why criest thou?* when it is plain, he did not speak a word. This is what the apostle means by the *Spirit making intercession* (for believers) *with groanings which cannot be uttered.* For there are times when the soul is too big to speak; when God fills it as it were, and overshadows it with his presence, so that it can only fall down, worship, adore, and lie in the dust before the Lord. Again, there is a time when the soul is benumbed, barren, and dry, and the believer has not a word to say to his heavenly Father; and then the heart only can speak. And I mention this for the encouragement of weak Christians, who think they never are accepted but when they have a flow of words, and fancy they do not please God at the bottom, for no other reason but because they do not please themselves. Such would do well to consider, that God knows the language of the heart, and the mind of the spirit; and that we make use of words, not to inform God, but to affect ourselves. When

ever therefore any of you find yourselves in such a frame, be not discouraged: Offer yourselves up in silence before God, as clay in the hands of the potter, for him to write and stamp his own divine image upon your souls. But I believe the Pharisee knew nothing of this way of prayer: He was self-righteous, a stranger to the divine life; and therefore either of the former explanations may be best put upon these words. *He stood, and prayed thus with himself; God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican.* Here is some appearance of devotion, but it is only in appearance. To thank God, that we are not extortioners, unjust, adulterers, and as wicked in our practices, as other men are, is certainly meet, right, and our bounden duty: For whatever degrees of goodness there may be in us, more than in others, it is owing to God's restraining, preventing, and assisting grace. We are all equally conceived and born in sin; all are fallen short of the glory of God, and liable to all the curses and maledictions of the law; so that he that glorieth, must glory only in the Lord. For none of us have any thing which we did not receive; and whatever we have received, we did not in the least merit it, nor could we lay the least claim to it on any account whatever: We are wholly indebted to free grace for all. Had the Pharisee thought thus, when he said, *God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are,* it would have been an excellent introduction to his prayer: But he was a free-willer, as well as self-righteous, (for he that is the one must be the other) and thought by his own power and strength he had kept himself from these vices. And yet I do not see what reason he had to trust in himself that he was righteous, merely because he was not an extortioner, unjust, adulterer; for all this while he might be, as he certainly was, (as is also every

self-righteous person) as proud as the devil. But he not only boasts, but lies before God (as all self-justificaries will be found liars here or hereafter.) He thanks God that he was not unjust: But is it not an act of the highest injustice to rob God of his prerogative? Is it not an act of injustice to judge our neighbour? And yet of both these crimes this self-righteous vaunter is guilty. *Even as this Publican!* He seems to speak with the utmost disdain; *this Publican!* Perhaps he pointed at the poor man, that others might treat him with the like contempt, Thou proud, confident boaster, what hadst thou to do with that poor Publican? Supposing other Publicans were unjust, and extortioners, did it therefore follow that he must be so? Or, if he had been such a sinner, how knowest thou but he has repented of those sins? His coming up to the temple to pray, is one good sign of a reformation at least. Thou art therefore inexcusable, O Pharisee, who thus judgest the Publican: For thou that judgest him to be unjust, art, in the very act of judging, unjust thyself: Thy sacrifice is only the sacrifice of a fool.

We have seen what the Pharisee's negative goodness comes to; I think nothing at all. Let us now see how far his positive goodness extends; for, if we are truly religious, we shall not only eschew evil, but also do good: *I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.*

The Pharisee is not here condemned for his fasting, for fasting is a Christian duty; *when you fast,* says our Lord, thereby taking it for granted that his disciples would fast. And *when the Bridegroom shall be taken away, then shall they fast in those days.* *In fasting often,* says the apostle. And all that would not be cast-aways, will take care, as their privilege, without legal constraint, to keep their bodies under, and bring them into subjection. The Pharisee is

only condemned for making a righteousness of his fasting, and thinking that God would accept him, or that he was any better than his neighbours, merely on account of his fasting: This is what he was blamed for. The Pharisee was not to be discommended for fasting twice in a week; I wish some Christians would imitate him more in this: But to depend on fasting in the least, for his justification in the sight of God, was really abominable. *I give tithes of all that I possess.* He might as well have said, *I pay tithes.* But self-righteous people (whatever they may say to the contrary) think they give something to God. *I give tithes of all that I possess:* I make conscience of giving tithes, not only of all that the law requires, but of my mint, annise, and cummin, of all things whatever I possess; this was well; but to boast of such things, or of fasting, is Pharisaical and devilish. Now then let us sum up all the righteousness of this boasting Pharisee, and see what little reason he had to *trust in himself, that he was righteous*, or to despise others. He is not unjust (but we have only his word for that, I think I have proved the contrary;) he is no adulterer, no extortioner; he fasts *twice in the week*, and gives *tithes of all that he possesses*; and all this he might do, and a great deal more, and yet be a child of the devil: For here is no mention made of his loving the Lord his God with all his heart, which was the *first and great commandment of the law*; here is not a single syllable of inward religion; and he was not a true Jew, who was only one outwardly. It is only an outside piety at the best; inwardly he is full of pride, self-justification, free-will, and great uncharitableness.

Were not the Pharisees, do you think, highly offended at this character? For they might easily know that it was spoken against them. And tho' perhaps some of you may be offended at me, yet,

out of love, I must tell you, I fear this parable is spoken against many of you: For are there not many of you, who go up to the temple to pray, with no better spirit than this Pharisee did? And because you fast, it may be in the Lent, or every Friday, and because you do no body any harm, receive the sacrament, pay tithes, and give an alms now and then; you think that you are safe, and trust in yourselves that you are righteous, and inwardly despise those, who do not come up to you in these outward duties? This, I am persuaded, is the case of many of you, though, alas! it is a desperate one, as I shall endeavour to shew at the close of this discourse.

Let us now take a view of the Publican, ver. 13. *And the Publican standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.*

The Publican standing afar off: Perhaps in the outward court of the temple, conscious to himself that he was not worthy to approach the holy of holies; so conscious, and so weighed down with a sense of his own unworthiness, that he would not so much as lift up his eyes unto heaven, which he knew was God's throne. Poor heart! what did he feel at this time! None but returning Publicans, like himself, can tell. Methinks I see him standing afar off, pensive, oppressed, and even overwhelmed with sorrow; sometimes he attempts to look up; but then, thinks he, the heavens are unclean in God's sight, and the very angels are charged with folly; how then shall such a wretch as I dare to lift up my guilty head! And to shew that his heart was full of holy self-resentment, and that he sorrowed after a godly sort, he smote upon his breast; the word in the original implies, that he *struck hard* upon his breast: He will lay the blame upon none but his own wicked heart. He will not, like un-

humbled Adam, tacitly lay the fault of his vileness upon God, and say, the *passions which thou gavest me, they deceived me, and I sinned*: He is too penitent thus to reproach his Maker; he smites upon his breast, his treacherous, ungrateful, desperately wicked breast; a breast now ready to burst: And at length, out of the abundance of his heart, I doubt not, with many tears, he at last cries out, *God be merciful to me a sinner*. Not, God be merciful to yonder proud Pharisee: He found enough in himself to vent his resentment against, without looking abroad upon others. Not, God be merciful to me a saint; for he knew all his righteousnesses were but filthy rags. Not, God be merciful to such or such a one; but, God be merciful to me, even to me a sinner, a sinner by birth, a sinner in thought, word, and deed; a sinner as to my person, a sinner as to all my performances; a sinner in whom is no health, in whom dwelleth no good thing; a sinner, poor, miserable, blind, and naked, from the crown of the head to the sole of the feet, full of wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores; a self-accused, self-condemned sinner. What think you? would this Publican have been offended if any minister had told him that he deserved to be damned? would he have been angry, if any one had told him, that by nature he was half a devil and half a beast? No: He would have confessed a thousand hells to have been his due, and that he was an earthly, devilish sinner. He felt now what a dreadful thing it was to depart from the living God: He felt that he was inexcusable every way; that he could in nowise, upon account of any thing in himself, be justified in the sight of God; and therefore lays himself at the feet of sovereign mercy, *God be merciful to me a sinner*. Here is no confidence in the flesh, no plea fetched from fasting, paying tithes, or the performance of any other

duty; here is no boasting that he was not an extortioner, unjust, or an adulterer. Perhaps he had been guilty of all these crimes, at least he knew he would have been guilty of all these, had he been left to follow the devices and desires of his own heart; and therefore, with a broken and contrite spirit, he cries out, *God be merciful to me a sinner.*

This man came up to the temple to pray, and he prayed indeed. And a broken and contrite heart God will not despise. *I tell you*, says our Lord, I who lay in the bosom of the Father from all eternity; I who am God, and therefore know all things; I who can neither deceive, nor be deceived, whose judgment is according to right; I tell you, whatever you may think of it, or of me for telling you so, this man, this Publican, this despised, sinful, but broken-hearted man, went down to his house justified (acquitted, and looked upon as righteous in the sight of God) rather than the other.

Let Pharisees take heed that they do not pervert this text: For when it is said, *this man went down to his house justified rather than the other*, our Lord does not mean that both were justified, and that the Publican had rather more justification than the Pharisee: But it implies, either that the Publican was actually justified, but the Pharisee was not; or, that the Publican was in a better way to receive justification, than the Pharisee; according to our Lord's saying, *the Publicans and harlots enter into the kingdom of heaven before you.* That the Pharisee was not justified is certain, for God resisteth the proud; and that the Publican was at this time actually justified (and perhaps went home with a sense of it in his heart) we have great reason to infer from the latter part of the text, *For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

The parable therefore now speaks to all who

hear me this day: For that our Lord intended it for our learning, is evident, from his making such a general application; *for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

The parable of the Publican and Pharisee, is but as it were a glass, wherein we may see the different disposition of all mankind; for all mankind may be divided into two general classes. Either they trust wholly in themselves, or in part, that they are righteous, and then they are Pharisees; or they have no confidence in the flesh, are self-condemned sinners, and then they come under the character of the Publican just now described. And we may add also, that the different reception these men met with, points out to us in lively colours, the different treatment the self-justiciary and self-condemned criminal will meet with at the terrible day of judgment: *every one that exalts himself shall be abased, but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

Every one, without exception, young or old, high or low, rich or poor (for God is no respecter of persons) every one, whosoever he be, that exalteth himself, and not free-grace; every one that trusteth in himself that he is righteous, that rests in his duties, or thinks to join them with the righteousness of Jesus Christ, for justification in the sight of God, though he be no adulterer, no extortioner, though he be not outwardly unjust, nay, though he fast twice in the week, and gives tithes of all that he possesses; yet shall he be abased in the sight of all good men who know him here, and before men and angels, and God himself, when Jesus Christ comes to appear in judgment hereafter. How low, none but the almighty God can tell. He shall be abased to live with devils, and make his abode in the lowest hell for evermore.

Hear this, all ye self-justiciaries, tremble, and

behold your doom! a dreadful doom, more dreadful than words can express, or thought conceive! If you refuse to humble yourselves, after hearing this parable, I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that God shall visit you with all his storms, and pour all the vials of his wrath upon your rebellious heads; you exalted yourselves here, and God shall abase you hereafter; you are as proud as the devil, and with devils shall you dwell to all eternity. Be not deceived, God is not mocked; he sees your hearts, he knows all things. And notwithstanding you may come up to the temple to pray, your prayers are turned into sin, and you go down to your houses unjustified, if you are self-justificaries; and do you know what it is to be unjustified? Why, if you are unjustified, the wrath of God abideth upon you; you are in your blood; all the curses of the law belong to you: Cursed are you when you go out, cursed are you when you come in; cursed are your thoughts, cursed are your words, cursed are your deeds; every thing you do, say, or think from morning to night, is only one continued series of sin. How ever highly you may be esteemed in the sight of men, however you may be honoured with the uppermost seats in the synagogues in the church militant, you will have no place in the church triumphant. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God: Pull down every self-righteous thought, and every proud imagination, that now exalteth itself against the perfect, personal, imputed righteousness of the dear Lord Jesus: For he (and he alone) that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

He that humbleth himself, whatever he be; if, instead of fasting twice in the week, he has been drunk twice in the week; if, instead of giving tithes of all that he possesses, he has cheated the minister of

his tithes, and king of his taxes; notwithstanding he be unjust, an extortioner, an adulterer, nay, notwithstanding the sins of all mankind center and unite in him; yet, if through grace, like the Publican, he is enabled to humble himself, he shall be exalted; not in a temporal manner; for Christians must rather expect to be abased, and to have their names cast out as evil, and to lay down their lives for Christ Jesus in this world: But he shall be exalted in a spiritual sense; he shall be freely justified from all his sins by the blood of Jesus; he shall have peace with God, a peace which passeth all understanding; not only peace, but joy in believing; he shall be translated from the kingdom of Satan, to the kingdom of God's dear Son: He shall dwell in Christ, and Christ in him: He shall be one with Christ, and Christ one with him: He shall drink of divine pleasures, as out of a river: He shall be sanctified throughout in spirit, soul, and body; in one word, he shall be filled with all the fulness of God. Thus shall the man that humbleth himself be exalted here; but O how high shall he be exalted hereafter! as high as the highest heavens, even to the right-hand of God: There he shall sit, happy both in soul and body, and judge angels; high, out of the reach of all sin and trouble, eternally secure from all danger of falling. O sinners, did you but know how highly God intends to exalt those who humble themselves, and believe in Jesus, surely you would humble yourselves, at least beg of God to humble you; for it is he that must strike the rock of your hearts, and cause floods of contrite tears to flow therefrom. O that God would give this sermon such a commission, as he once gave to the rod of Moses! I would strike you through and through with the rod of his word, until each of you was brought to cry out with the poor Publican, *God be merciful to me a sinner.* What plea-

sant language would this be in the ears of the Lord of Sabbaoth!

Are there no poor sinners among you? What, are you all Pharisees? Surely, you cannot bear the thoughts of returning home unjustified; can you? what if a fit of the apoplexy should seize you, and your souls be hurried away before the awful judge of quick and dead? What will you do without Christ's righteousness? If you go out of the world unjustified, you must remain so for ever. O that you would humble yourselves! then would the Lord exalt you; it may be, that, whilst I am speaking, the Lord might justify you freely by his grace. I observed, that perhaps the Publican had a sense of his justification before he went from the temple, and knew that his pardon was sealed in heaven: And who knows but you may be thus exalted before you go home, if you humble yourselves? O what peace, love, and joy, would you then feel in your hearts! You would have a heaven upon earth. O that I could hear any of you say (as I once heard a poor sinner, under my preaching cry out) *He is come, he is come!* How would you then, like him, extol a precious, a free-hearted Christ! How would you magnify him for being such a friend to Publicans and sinners? Greater love can no man shew, than to lay down his life for a friend; but Christ laid down his life for his enemies, even for you, if you are enabled to humble yourselves, as the Publican did. Sinners, I know not how to leave off talking with you; I would fill my mouth with arguments, I would plead with you. *Come, let us reason together;* though your sins be as scarlet, yet, if you humble yourselves, they shall be as white as snow. One act of true faith in Christ justifies you for ever and ever; he has not promised you what he cannot perform; he is able to exalt you: For God hath exalted, and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow; nay, God hath

exalted him to be not only a Prince, but a Saviour. May he be a Saviour to you! and then I shall have reason to rejoice in the day of judgment, that I have not preached in vain, nor laboured in vain.

S E R M O N VIII.

The Holy Spirit convincing the World of Sin,
Righteousness, and Judgment.

J O H N xvi. 8.

*And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin,
and of righteousness, and of judgment.*

THES E words contain part of a gracious promise, which the blessed Jesus was pleased to make to his weeping and sorrowful disciples. The time was now drawing near, in which the Son of man was first to be lifted upon the cross, and afterwards to heaven. Kind, wondrous kind! had this merciful High-priest been to his disciples, during the time of his tabernacling amongst them. He had compassion on their infirmities, answered for them when assaulted by their enemies, and set them right when out of the way, either in principle or practice. He neither called nor used them as servants, but as friends; and he revealed his secrets to them from time to time. He opened their understandings, that they might understand the scriptures; explained to them the hidden mysteries of the kingdom of God, when he spoke to others in parables: Nay, he became the servant of them all, and even condescended to wash their feet. The thoughts of parting with so dear and loving a Master as this, especially for a long season, must needs affect them much. When on a certain occasion he intended to

be absent from them only for a night; we are told, he was obliged to constrain them to leave him; no wonder then, that when he now informed them he must entirely go away, and that the Pharisees in his absence would put them out of their synagogues, and excommunicate them; yea, that the time should come, that whosoever killed them, would think they did God service (a prophecy, one would imagine, in an especial manner designed for the suffering ministers of this generation); no wonder, I say, considering all this, that we are told, ver. 6. Sorrow had filled their hearts: *Because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your hearts* The expression is very emphatical; their hearts were so full of concern, that they were ready to burst. In order, therefore, to reconcile them to this mournful dispensation, our dear and compassionate Redeemer shews them the necessity he lay under to leave them; *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away*: As though he had said, Think not, my dear disciples, that I leave you out of anger: No, it is for your sakes, for your profit, that I go away: For if I go not away, if I die not upon the cross for your sins, and rise again for your justification; and ascend into heaven to make intercession, and plead my merits before my Father's throne, the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, will not, cannot come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And that they might know what he was to do, *When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.*

The person referred to in the words of the text, is plainly the Comforter, the Holy Ghost; and the promise was first made to our Lord's apostles. But though it was primarily made to them, and was literally and remarkably fulfilled at the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost came down as a mighty rushing wind, and also when three thousand were pricked to the heart by Peter's preaching;

yet, as the apostles were the representatives of the whole body of believers, we must infer, that this promise must be looked upon as spoken to us, and to our children, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call.

My design from these words, is to shew the manner in which the Holy Ghost generally works upon the hearts of those, who, through grace, are made vessels of mercy, and translated from the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

I say, *generally*: For, as God is a sovereign agent, his sacred Spirit bloweth not only on whom, but when and how it listeth. Therefore, far be it from me to confine the Almighty to one way of acting, or say, that all undergo an equal degree of conviction: No, there is a holy variety in God's methods of calling home his elect. But this we may affirm assuredly, that, wherever there is a work of true conviction and conversion wrought upon a sinner's heart, the Holy Ghost, whether by a greater or less degree of inward soul-trouble, does that which our Lord Jesus told the disciples, in the words of the text, that he should do when he came.

If any of you ridicule inward religion, or think there is no such thing as our feeling or receiving the Holy Ghost, I fear my preaching will be quite foolishness to you, and that you will understand me no more than if I spoke to you in an unknown tongue. But as the promise in the text is made to the world, and as I know it will be fulfilling till time shall be no more, I shall proceed to explain the general way whereby the Holy Ghost works upon every converted sinner's heart; and I hope that the Lord, even whilst I am speaking, will be pleased to fulfil it in many of your hearts. *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.*

The word which we translate *reprove*, ought to

be rendered *convince*; and in the original it implies a conviction by way of argumentation, and coming with a power upon the mind equal to a demonstration. A great many scoffers of these last days, will ask such as they term pretenders to the Spirit, how they feel the Spirit, and how they know the Spirit? They might as well ask, how they know, and how they feel the sun when it shines upon the body? For with equal power and demonstration does the Spirit of God work upon and convince the soul. And,

First, It convinces of sin; and generally of some enormous sin, the worst perhaps the convicted person ever was guilty of. Thus, when our Lord was conversing with the woman of Samaria, he convinced her first of her adultery: *Woman, go call thy husband.* The woman answered, and said, *I have no husband.* Jesus said unto her, *Thou hast well said, I have no husband: For thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast, is not thy husband: In this saidst thou truly.* With this there went such a powerful conviction of all her other actual sins, that soon after, she left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, *Come, and see a man that told me all things that ever I did: Is not this the Christ?* Thus our Lord also dealt with the persecutor Saul: He convinced him first of the horrid sin of persecution; *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* Such a sense of all his other sins, probably at the same time revived in his mind, that immediately he died; that is, died to all his false confidences, and was thrown into such an agony of soul, that he continued three days, and neither did eat nor drink. This is the method the Spirit of God generally takes in dealing with sinners; he first convinces them of some heinous actual sin, and at the same time brings all their other sins into remembrance, and as it were sets

them in battle-array before them: *When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin.*

And was it ever thus with you, my dear hearers? (For I must question you as I go along, because I intend, by the divine help, to preach not only to your heads, but your hearts.) Did the Spirit of God ever bring all your sins thus to remembrance, and make you cry out to God, *thou writest bitter things against me?* Did your actual sins ever appear before you, as though drawn in a map? If not, you have great reason (unless you were sanctified from the womb) to suspect that you are not convicted, much more not converted, and that the promise of the text was never yet fulfilled in your hearts.

Farther: When the Comforter comes into a sinner's heart, though it generally convinces the sinner of his actual sin first, yet it leads him to see and bewail his original sin, the fountain from which all these polluted streams do flow.

Though every thing in the earth, air and water; every thing both without and within, concur to prove the truth of that assertion in the scripture, *in Adam we all have died*; yet most are so hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, that notwithstanding they may give an assent to the truth of the proposition in their heads, yet they never felt it really in their hearts. Nay, some in words professedly deny it, though their works too, too plainly prove them to be degenerate sons of a degenerate father. But when the Comforter, the Spirit of God, arrests a sinner, and convinces him of sin, all carnal reasoning against original corruption, every proud and high imagination, which exalteth itself against that doctrine, is immediately thrown down; and he is made to cry out, *Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* He now finds that concupiscence is sin; and does not so much bewail his actual sins, as the inward perverseness of his

heart, which he now finds not only to be an enemy to, but also direct enmity against God,

And did the Comforter, my dear friends, ever come with such a convincing power as this into your hearts? Were you ever made to see and feel, that in your flesh dwelleth no good thing; that you are conceived and born in sin; that you are by nature children of wrath; that God would be just if he damned you, though you never committed an actual sin in your lives? So often as you have been at church and sacrament, did you ever feelingly confess, that there was no health in you; that the remembrance of your original and actual sins was grievous unto you, and the burden of them intolerable? If not, you have been only offering to God vain oblations; you never yet prayed in your lives, the Comforter never yet came effectually into your souls: Consequently you are not in the faith properly so called; no, you are at present in a state of death and damnation.

Again, the Comforter, when he comes effectually to work upon a sinner, not only convinces him of the sin of his nature, and the sin of his life, but also of the sin of his duties.

We all naturally are legalists, thinking to be justified by the works of the law. When somewhat awakened by the terrors of the Lord, we immediately, like the Pharisees of old, go about to establish our own righteousness, and think we shall find acceptance with God, if we seek it with tears: Finding ourselves damned by nature and our actual sins, we then think to recommend ourselves to God by our duties, and hope, by our doings of one kind or another, to inherit eternal life. But, whenever the Comforter comes into the heart, it convinces the soul of these false rests, and makes the sinner to see that all his righteousnesses are but as filthy rags; that his best works are but so many splendid sins; and that, for the most pompous services, he deserves

no better a doom than that of the unprofitable servant, to be thrown into outer darkness, where is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

And was this degree of conviction ever wrought in any of your souls? Did the Comforter ever come into your hearts, so as to make you sick of your duties, as well as your sins? Were you ever, with the great apostle of the Gentiles, made to abhor your own righteousness which is by the law, and acknowledge that you deserve to be damned, tho' you should give all your goods to feed the poor? Were you made to feel, that your very repentance needed to be repented of, and that every thing in yourselves is but dung and dross? And that all the arguments you can fetch for mercy, must be out of the heart and pure unmerited love of God? Were you ever made to lie at the feet of sovereign grace, and to say, Lord, if thou wilt, thou mayest save me; if not, thou mayest justly damn me; I have nothing to plead, I can in no wise justify myself in thy sight; my best performances, I see will condemn me; and all I have to depend upon is thy free grace? What say you? Was this ever, or is this now, the habitual language of your hearts? You have been frequently at the temple; but did you ever approach it in the temper of the poor Publican; and, after you have done all, acknowledge that you have done nothing; and upon a feeling experimental sense of your own unworthiness and sinfulness every way, smite upon your breasts, and say, *God be merciful to us sinners*? If you never were thus minded, the Comforter never yet effectually came into your souls; you are out of Christ; and if God should require your souls in that condition, he would be no better to you than a consuming fire.

But there is a fourth sin, of which the Comforter, when he comes, convinces the soul, and which alone (it is very remarkable) our Lord mentions,

as though it was the only sin worth mentioning; for indeed it is the root of all other sins whatsoever: It is the reigning as well as the damning sin of the world. And what now do you imagine that sin may be? It is that cursed sin, that root of all other evils, I mean the sin of unbelief. *Of sin, because they believe not on me.*

But does the Christian world or any of you that hear me this day, want the Holy Ghost to convince you of unbelief? Are there any infidels here? Yes, (O that I had not too great reason to think so) I fear most are such: Not indeed such infidels as professedly deny the Lord that bought us (though I fear too many even of such monsters are in every country;) but I mean such unbelievers, that have no more faith in Christ than the devils themselves. Perhaps you may think you believe, because you repeat the creed, or subscribe to a confession of faith; because you go to church or meeting, receive the sacrament, and are taken into full communion. These are blessed privileges; but all this may be done, without our being true believers. And I know not how to detect your false hypocritical faith better, than by putting to you this question: How long have you believed? Would not most of you say, as long as we can remember, we never did disbelieve. Then this is a certain sign that you have no true faith at all; No, not so much as a grain of mustard-seed: For if you believe now, (unless you were sanctified from your infancy, which is the case of some) you must know that there was a time in which you did not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; and the Holy Ghost, if ever you received it, convinced you of this. Eternal Truth has declared, *when he is come, he will convince the world of sin, because they believe not on me.*

None of us believe by nature: But after the Holy Ghost has convinced us of the sin of our natures, and the sin of our lives and duties, in order to

convince us of our utter inability to save ourselves, and that we must be beholden to God, as for every thing else, so for faith (without which it is impossible to please, or be saved by Christ) he convinces us also, that we have no faith. Dost thou believe on the Son of God? is the grand question which the Holy Ghost now puts to the soul: At the same time he works with such power and demonstrations, that the soul sees, and is obliged to confess, that it has no faith.

This is a thing little thought of by most who call themselves believers. They dream they are Christians because they live in a Christian country: If they were born Turks, they would believe on Mahomet; for what is that which men commonly call faith, but an outward consent to the established religion? But do not you thus deceive your own selves; true faith is quite another thing. Ask yourselves, therefore, whether or not the Holy Ghost ever powerfully convinced you of the sin of unbelief? You are perhaps so devout (you may imagine) as to get a catalogue of sins, which you look over, and confess in a formal manner, as often as you go to the holy sacrament: But among all your sins, did you ever once confess and bewail that damning sin of unbelief? Were you ever made to cry out, Lord, give me faith; Lord, give me to believe on thee; O that I had faith! O that I could believe! If you never were thus distressed, at least, if you never saw and felt, that you had no faith, it is a certain sign that the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, never came into and worked savingly upon your souls.

But is it not odd, that the Holy Ghost should be called a Comforter, when it is plain, by the experience of all God's children, that this work of conviction is usually attended with sore inward conflicts, and a great deal of soul-trouble? I answer, the Holy Ghost may well be termed a Comforter, even in this work; because it is the only way to, and

ends in, true solid comfort. Blessed are they that are thus convicted by him; for they shall be comforted. Nay, not only so, but there is present comfort, even in the midst of these convictions: The soul secretly rejoices in the sight of its own misery, blesses God for bringing it out of darkness into light, and looks forward with a comfortable prospect of future deliverances, knowing, that, *though sorrow may endure for a night, joy will come in the morning.*

Thus it is that the Holy Ghost convinces the soul of sin. And, if so, how wretchedly are they mistaken, that blend the light of the Spirit with the light of conscience, as all such do, who say, that Christ lighteth every man that cometh into the world, and that light, if improved, will bring us to Jesus Christ? If such doctrine be true, the promise in the text was needless: Our Lord's apostles had already that light; the world hereafter to be convinced, had that light; and, if that was sufficient to bring them to Christ, why was it expedient that Christ should go away to heaven, to send down the Holy Ghost to do this for them? Alas! all have not this Spirit: It is the special gift of God, and, without this special gift, we can never come to Christ.

The light of conscience will accuse or convince us of any common sin; but the light of natural conscience never did, never will, and never can convince of unbelief. If it could, how comes it to pass, that not one of the heathens, who improved the light of nature in such an eminent degree, was ever convinced of unbelief? No, natural conscience cannot effect this; it is the peculiar property of the Holy Ghost the Comforter: *When he is come, he will reprove (or convince) the world of sin, of righteousness, and judgment.*

We have heard how he convinces of sin: We come now to shew,

Secondly, What is the righteousness, of which the Comforter convinces the world.

By the word *righteousness*, in some places of scripture, we are to understand that common justice which we ought to practise between man and man; as when Paul is said to reason of temperance and righteousness before a trembling Felix. But here (as in a multitude of other places in holy writ) we are to understand by the word righteousness, the active and passive obedience of the dear Lord Jesus; even that perfect, personal, all-sufficient righteousness, which he has wrought out for that world which the Spirit is to convince. *Of righteousness*, (says our Lord) *because I go to the Father, and ye see me no more.* This is one argument that the Holy Spirit makes use of to prove Christ's righteousness, because he is gone to the Father, and we see him no more. For had he not wrought out a sufficient righteousness, the Father would have sent him back, as not having done what he undertook; and we should have seen him again.

O the righteousness of Christ! It so comforts my soul, that I must be excused if I mention it in almost all my discourses. I would not, if I could help it, have one sermon without it. Whatever infidels may object, or Arminians sophistically argue against an imputed righteousness; yet whoever know themselves and God, must acknowledge, that "Jesus Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, (and perfect justification in the sight of God,) to every one that believeth," and that we are to be made the righteousness of God in him. This, and this only, a poor sinner can lay hold of, as a sure anchor of his hope. Whatever other scheme of salvation men may lay, I acknowledge I can see no other foundation whereon to build my hopes of salvation, but on the rock of Christ's personal righteousness, imputed to my soul.

Many, I believe, have a rational conviction of,

and agree with me in this: But rational convictions, if rested in, avail but little; it must be a spiritual, experimental conviction of the truth which is saving. And therefore our Lord says, when the Holy Ghost comes in the day of his power, it convinces of this righteousness, of the reality, completeness, and sufficiency of it, to save a poor sinner.

We have seen how the Holy Ghost convinces the sinner of the sin of his nature, life, duties, and of the sin of unbelief; and what then must the poor creature do? He must, he must inevitably despair, if there be no hope but in himself. When therefore the Spirit has hunted the sinner out of all his false rests and hiding-places, taken off the pitiful fig-leaves of his own works, and driven him out of the trees of the garden (his outward reformations) and placed him naked before the bar of a sovereign, holy, just, and sin-avenging God; then, then it is, when the soul, having the sentence of death within itself because of unbelief, has a sweet display of Christ's righteousness made to it by the Holy Spirit of God. Here it is, that he begins more immediately to act in the quality of a Comforter, and convinces the soul so powerfully of the reality and all-sufficiency of Christ's righteousness, that the soul is immediately set a hungering and thirsting after it. Now the sinner begins to see, that though he has destroyed himself, yet in Christ is his help; that, though he has no righteousness of his own to recommend him, there is a fulness of grace, a fulness of truth, a fulness of righteousness in the dear Lord Jesus, which, if once imputed to him, would make him happy for ever and ever.

None can tell, but those happy souls who have experienced it, with what demonstration of the Spirit this conviction comes. O how amiable, as well as all-sufficient, does the blessed Jesus now appear! With what new eyes does the soul now see

the Lord its righteousness! Brethren, it is unutterable: If you were never thus convinced of Christ's righteousness in your own souls, though you may believe it doctrinally, it will avail you nothing; if the Comforter never came savingly into your souls, then you are comfortless indeed. But

What will this righteousness avail, if the soul has it not in possession?

Thirdly, The next thing therefore the Comforter, when he comes, convinces the soul of, is judgment.

By the word *judgment*, I understand that well-grounded peace, that settled judgment, which the soul forms of itself, when it is enabled by the Spirit of God to lay hold on Christ's righteousness, which I believe it always does, when convinced in the manner before-mentioned. *Of judgement*, (says our Lord) *because the Prince of this world is judged*: the soul, being enabled to lay hold on Christ's perfect righteousness by a lively faith, has a conviction wrought in it by the Holy Spirit, that the *Prince of this world is judged*. The soul being now justified by faith, has peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and can triumphantly say, it is Christ that justifies me, who is he that condemns me? The strong man armed is now cast out; my soul is in a true peace; the Prince of this world will come and accuse, but he has now no share in me: The blessed Spirit which I have received, and whereby I am enabled to apply Christ's righteousness to my poor soul, powerfully convinces me of this: Why should I fear? Or of what shall I be afraid, since God's Spirit witnesses with my spirit, that I am a child of God? The Lord is ascended up on high; he has led captivity captive; he has received the Holy Ghost the Comforter, that best of gifts for men: And that Comforter is come into my heart: He is faithful that hath promised: I, even I, am powerfully, rationally, spiritually con-

victed of sin, righteousness, and judgment. By this I know the Prince of this world is judged.

Thus, I say, may we suppose that soul to triumph, in which the promise of the text is happily fulfilled. And though, at the beginning of this discourse, I said, most had never experienced any thing of this, and that therefore this preaching must be foolishness to such; yet I doubt not but there are some few happy souls, who, through grace, have been enabled to follow me step by step; and notwithstanding the Holy Ghost might not directly work in the same order as I have described, and perhaps they cannot exactly say the time when, yet they have a well-grounded confidence that the work is done, and that they have really been convinced of sin, righteousness, and judgment, in some way, or at some time or another.

And now what shall I say to you? O thank God, thank the Lord Jesus, thank the ever-blessed Trinity, for this unspeakable gift: For you would never have been thus highly favoured, had not he who first spoke darkness into light, loved you with an everlasting love, and enlightened you by his Holy Spirit, and that too, not on account of any good thing foreseen in you, but for his own name's sake.

Be humble therefore, O believers, be humble: Look to the rock from whence you have been hewn: Extol free grace; admire electing love, which alone has made you to differ from the rest of your brethren. Has God brought you into light? Walk as becometh the children of light. Provoke not the Holy Spirit to depart from you: For though he hath sealed you to the day of redemption, and you know that the Prince of this world is judged; yet if you backslide, grow lukewarm, or forget your first love, the Lord will visit your offences with the rod of affliction, and your sin with spiritual scourges. Be not therefore high-minded, but fear. Rejoice, but let it be with trembling. As the elect of God,

put on, not only humbleness of mind, but bowels of compassion; and pray, O pray for your unconverted brethren! Help me, help me now, O children of God, and hold up my hands, as Aaron and Hur once held up the hands of Moses. Pray, whilst I am preaching, that the Lord may enable me to say, This day is the promise in the text fulfilled in some poor sinners hearts. Cry mightily to God, and, with the cords of a holy violence, pull down blessings on your neighbours heads. Christ yet lives and reigns in heaven: The residue of the Spirit is yet in his hand, and a plentiful effusion of it is promised in the latter days of the church. And O that the Holy Ghost, the blessed Comforter, would now come down, and convince those that are CHRIST-less among you, *of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment!* O that you were once made willing to be convinced!

But perhaps you had rather be filled with wine than with the Spirit, and are daily chasing that Holy Ghost from your souls. What shall I say for you to God? *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* What shall I say from God to you? *Why? that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself:* Therefore I beseech you, as in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. Do not go away contradicting and blaspheming. I know Satan would have you begone. Many of you may be uneasy, and are ready to cry out, *What a weariness is this!* But I will not let you go: I have wrestled with God for my hearers in private, and I must wrestle with you here in public. Though of myself I can do nothing, and you can no more by your own power come to and believe on Christ, than Lazarus could come forth from the grave; yet who knows but God may beget some of you again to a lively hope by this foolishness of preaching, and that you may be some of that world, which the Comforter is to convince *of sin, of righteousness, and*

of judgment? Poor CHRIST-less souls! do you know what a condition you are in? Why, you are lying in the wicked one, the devil; he rules in you, he walks and dwells in you, unless you dwell in Christ, and the Comforter is come into your hearts. And will you contentedly lie in that wicked one the devil? What wages will he give you? Eternal death. O that you would come to Christ! The free gift of God through him is eternal life. He will accept of you even now, if you will believe in him. The Comforter may yet come into your hearts, even yours. All that are now his living temples, were once lying in the wicked one, as well as you. This blessed gift, this Holy Ghost, the blessed Jesus received even for the rebellious.

I see many of you affected: But are your passions only a little wrought upon, or are your souls really touched with a lively sense of the heinousness of your sins, your want of faith, and the preciousness of the righteousness of Jesus Christ? If so, I hope the Lord has been gracious, and that the Comforter is coming into your hearts. O do not stifle these convictions! Do not go away, and straightway forget what manner of doctrine you have heard, and thereby shew that these are only common workings of a few transient convictions, floating upon the surface of your hearts. Beg of God that you may be sincere (for he alone can make you so) and that you may indeed desire the promise of the text to be fulfilled in your souls. Who knows but the Lord may be gracious? Remember you have no plea but sovereign mercy; but for your encouragement also, remember it is the world, such as you are, to whom the Comforter is to come, and whom he is to convince: Wait therefore at wisdom's gates. The bare probability of having a door of mercy opened, is enough to keep you striving. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, the chief of them: You know not but he

he came to save you. Do not go and quarrel with God's decrees, and say, if I am a reprobate, I shall be damned; if I am elected, I shall be saved; and therefore I will do nothing. What have you to do with God's decrees? Secret things belong to him; it is your business to give *all diligence to make your calling and election sure*. If there are but few who find the way that leads to life, do you strive to be some of them: You know not but you may be in the number of those few, and that your striving may be the means which God intends to bless, to give you an entrance in. If you do not act thus, you are not sincere; and, if you do, who knows but you may find mercy? For though after you have done all that you can, God may justly cut you off, yet never was a single person damned who did all that he could. Though therefore your hands are withered, stretch them out; though you are impotent, sick, and lame, come, lie at the pool. Who knows but by and by the Lord Jesus may have compassion on you, and send the Comforter to convince you of sin, righteousness, and of judgment? He is a God full of compassion and long-suffering, otherwise you and I had been long since lifting up our eyes in torments. But still he is patient with us!

O CHRIST-less sinners, you are alive, and who knows but God intends to bring you to repentance? Could my prayers or tears effect it, you should have volleys of the one, and floods of the other. My heart is touched with a sense of your condition: May our merciful High-Priest now send down the Comforter, and make you sensible of it also! O the love of Christ! It constrains me to beseech you to come to him; what do you reject, if you reject Christ, the Lord of glory! Sinners, give the dear Redeemer a lodging in your souls. Do not be Bethshemites; give Christ your hearts, your whole hearts. Indeed he is worthy.

He made you and not you yourselves. You are not your own; give Christ then your bodies and souls, which are his! Is it not enough to melt you down, to think that the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, should condescend to invite you by his ministers? How soon can he frown you to hell? And how know you but he may this very instant, if you do not hear his voice? Did any yet harden their hearts against Christ, and prosper? Come then do not send me sorrowful away: Do not let me have reason to cry out, O my leanness, my leanness! Do not let me go weeping into my closet, and say, "Lord, they will not believe my report; Lord, I have called them, and they will not answer; I am unto them as a very pleasant song, and as one that plays upon a pleasant instrument; but their hearts are running after the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life." Would you be willing that I should give such an account of you, or make such a prayer before God? And yet I must not only do so here, but appear in judgment against you hereafter, unless you will come to Christ. Once more therefore I intreat you to come. What objections have you to make? Behold, I stand here in the name of God, to answer all that you can offer. But I know no one can come, unless the Father draw him: I will therefore address me to my God, and intercede with him to send the Comforter into your hearts.

O blessed Jesus, who art a God whose compassions fail not, and in whom all the promises are yea and amen; thou that sittest between the cherubims, shew thyself amongst us. Let us now see thy outgoings! O let us now taste that thou art gracious, and reveal thy almighty arm! Get thyself the victory in these poor sinners hearts. Let not the word spoken prove like water spilt upon the ground. Send down, send down, O great

High-Priest, the Holy Spirit, to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. So will we give thanks and praise to thee, O Father, thee O Son, and thee O blessed Spirit; to whom as three Persons, but one God, be ascribed, by angels and archangels, by cherubims and seraphims, and all the heavenly hosts, all possible power, might, majesty, and dominion, now and for evermore. *Amen, Amen, Amen.*

S E R M O N IX.

The Conversion of Zaccheus,

LUKE XIX. 9, 10.

And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is the son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

SALVATION, every where through the whole scripture, is said to be the free gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Not only free, because God is a sovereign Agent, and therefore may withhold it from, or confer it on, whom he pleaseth; but free, because there is nothing to be found in man, that can any way induce God to be merciful unto him. The righteousness of Jesus Christ is the sole cause of our finding favour in God's sight: This righteousness apprehended by faith (which is also the gift of God) makes it our own; and this faith, if true, will work by love.

These are parts of those glad tidings which are published in the gospel; and of the certainty of them, next to the express word of God, the expe-

rience of all such as have been saved, is the best, and, as I take it, the most undoubted proof. That God might teach us every way, he has been pleased to live upon record many instances of the power of his grace exerted in the salvation of several persons, that we, hearing how he dealt with them, might from thence infer the manner we must expect to be dealt with ourselves, and learn in what way we must look for salvation, if we truly desire to be made partakers of the inheritance with the saints in light.

The conversion of the person referred to in the text, I think, will be of no small service to us in this matter, if rightly improved. I would hope, most of you know who the person is, to whom the Lord Jesus speaks; it is the Publican Zaccheus, to whose house the blessed Jesus said, salvation came, and whom he pronounces a son of Abraham.

It is my design (God helping) to make some remarks upon his conversion recorded at large in the preceding verses, and then to inforce the latter part of the text, as an encouragement to poor undone sinners to come to Jesus Christ. *For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

The evangelist Luke introduces the account of this man's conversion thus, ver. 1. *And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.* The holy Jesus made it his business to go about doing good. As the sun in the firmament is continually spreading his benign, quickening, and cheering influences over the natural; so the Son of Righteousness arose with healing under his wings, and was daily and hourly diffusing his gracious influences over the moral world. The preceding chapter acquaints us of a notable miracle wrought by the holy Jesus on a poor blind Bartimeus; and in this, a greater presents itself to our consideration. The evange-

list would have us take particular notice of it; for he introduces it with the word *behold*: *And behold, there was a man named Zaccheus, who was the chief among the Publicans, and he was rich.*

Well might the evangelist usher in the relation of this man's conversion with the word *behold*! For, according to human judgment, how many unsurmountable obstacles lay in the way of it! Surely no one will say there was any fitness in Zaccheus for salvation; for we are told that he was a Publican, and therefore in all probability a notorious sinner. The Publicans were gatherers of the Roman taxes; they were infamous for their abominable extortion; their very name therefore became so odious, that we find the Pharisees often reproached our Lord, as very wicked, because he was a friend unto and sat down to meat with them. Zaccheus then, being a Publican, was no doubt a sinner; and, being chief among the Publicans, consequently was chief among sinners. Nay, *he was rich.* And one inspired apostle has told us, that not *many mighty*, not *many noble*, are called. Another saith, *God has chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith.* And he who was the Maker and the Redeemer of the apostles, assures us, *that it is easier for a camel (or cable-rope) to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.* Let not therefore the rich glory in the multitude of their riches.

But rich as he was, we are told, ver. 3. that *he sought to see Jesus.* And that was a wonder indeed! The common people heard our Lord gladly, and the poor received the gospel. The multitude, the *crowd*, the mob, the people that knew not the law, as the proud high-priests called them, used to follow him on foot into the country, and sometimes stayed with him three days together to hear him preach: But did the rich believe or attend on him? No. Our Lord preached up the doctrine of the cross; he preached too searching for them, and therefore

they counted him their enemy, persecuted and spoke all manner of evil against him falsely. Let not the ministers of Christ marvel, if they meet with the like treatment from the rich men of this wicked and adulterous generation. I should think it no scandal (supposing it true) to hear it affirmed, that none but the poor attended my ministry. Their souls are as precious to our Lord Jesus Christ, as the souls of the greatest men. They were the poor that attended him in the days of his flesh: These are they whom he hath chosen to be rich in faith, and to be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Were the rich in this world's goods generally to speak well of me, wo be unto me; I should think it a dreadful sign that I was only a wolf in sheep's clothing, that I spoke peace, peace, when there was no peace, and prophesied smoother things than the gospel would allow of. Hear ye this, O ye rich. Let who will dare to do it, God forbid that I should despise the poor; in doing so, I should reproach my Maker! The poor are dear to my soul; I rejoice to see them fly to the doctrine of Christ, like the doves to their windows. I only pray that the poor, who attend, may be evangelized, and turned into the spirit of the gospel: *If so, blessed are ye; for yours is the kingdom of heaven.*

But we must return to Zaccheus. *He sought to see Jesus.* That is good news. I heartily wish I could say, it was out of a good principle: But, without speaking contrary to that charity which hopes and believeth all things for the best, we may say, that the same principle drew him after Christ, which now draws multitudes (to speak plainly, it may be multitudes of you) to hear a particular preacher, even curiosity; For we are told, that he came not to hear his doctrine, but to view his person, or, to use the words of the evangelist, *to see who he was.* Our Lord's fame was now spread a broad through all Jerusalem, and all the country

round about: Some said he was a good man; others, nay, but he deceiveth the people. And therefore curiosity drew out this rich Publican Zaccheus to see who this person was, of whom he had heard such various accounts. But it seems he could not conveniently get a sight of him for the press, and because he was *little of stature*. Alas! how many are kept from seeing Christ in glory, by reason of the press. I mean, how many are ashamed of being singularly good, and therefore follow a multitude to do evil, because they have a press or throng of polite acquaintance! And, for fear of being set at nought by those with whom they used to sit at meat, they deny the Lord of glory, and are ashamed to confess him before men. This base, this servile fear of man, is the bane of true Christianity; it brings a dreadful snare upon the soul, and is the ruin of ten thousands: For I am fully persuaded, numbers are rationally convicted of gospel-truths; but, not being able to brook contempt, they will not prosecute their convictions, nor reduce them to practice. Happy those, who in this respect, at least, like Zaccheus, resolved to overcome all impediments that lie in their way to a sight of Christ: For, finding he could not see Christ because of the press, and the littleness of his natural stature, he did not smite upon his breast, and depart, saying, "It is in vain to seek after a sight of him any longer, I can never attain unto it." No, finding he could not see Christ, if he continued in the midst of, *he ran before the multitude, and climbed up into a sycamore-tree, to see him; for he was to pass that way.*

There is no seeing Christ in glory, unless we run before the multitude, and are willing to be in the number of those despised few, who take the kingdom of God by violence. The broad way, in which so many go, can never be that strait and narrow way which leads to life. Our Lord's flock was,

and always will be, comparatively a little one: And unless we dare to run before the multitude in a holy singularity, and can rejoice in being accounted fools for Christ's sake, we shall never see Jesus with comfort, when he appears in glory. From mentioning the sycamore-tree, and considering the difficulty with which Zaccheus must climb it, we may farther learn, that those who would see Christ, must undergo other difficulties and hardships, besides contempt. Zaccheus, without doubt, went through both. Did not many, think you, laugh at him as he ran along, and in the language of Michal, Saul's daughter, cry out, how glorious did the rich Zaccheus look to-day, when, forgetting the greatness of his station, he ran before a pitiful, giddy mob, and climbed up a sycamore-tree, to see an enthusiastic preacher! But Zaccheus cares not for all that; his curiosity was strong: If he could but see who Jesus was, he did not value what scoffers said of him. Thus, and much more will it be with all those who have an effectual desire to see Jesus in heaven: They will go on from strength to strength, break through every difficulty lying in their way, and care not what men or devils say of or do unto them. May the Lord make us all thus minded, for his dear Son's sake!

At length, after taking much pains, and going (as we may well suppose) through much contempt, Zaccheus has climbed the tree; and there he sits, as he thinks, hid in the leaves of it, and watching when he should see Jesus pass by: *For he was to pass by that way.*

But sing, O heavens, and rejoice, O earth! Praise, magnify, and adore sovereign, electing, free, preventing love; Jesus the everlasting God, the Prince of peace, who saw Nathaniel under the fig-tree, and Zaccheus from eternity, now sees him in the sycamore-tree, and calls him in time.

Ver. 5. *And when Jesus came to the place, he looked*

up, and saw him, and said unto him, *Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for this day I must abide at thy house.* Amazing love! Well might Luke usher in the account with *behold!* It is worthy of our highest admiration. When Zaccheus thought of no such thing, nay, thought that Christ Jesus did not know him; behold, Christ does what we never hear he did before or after, I mean, invite himself to the house of Zaccheus, saying, *Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for this day I must abide at thy house.* Not pray let me abide, but *I must* abide this day at thy house. He also calls him by name, as though he was well acquainted with him: And indeed well he might; for his name was written in the book of life, he was one of those whom the Father had given him from all eternity: Therefore he must abide at his house that day. *For whom he did predestinate, them he also called.*

Here then, as through a glass, we may see the doctrine of free-grace evidently exemplified before us. Here was no fitness in Zaccheus. He was a Publican, chief among the Publicans; not only so, but rich, and came to see Christ only out of curiosity: But sovereign grace triumphs over all. And if we do God justice, and are effectually wrought upon, we must acknowledge there was no more fitness in us than in Zaccheus; and, had not Christ prevented us by his call, we had remained dead in trespasses and sins, and alienated from the divine life, even as others. *Jesus looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for this day I must abide at thy house.*

With what different emotions of heart may we suppose Zaccheus received this invitation? Think you not that he was surprized to hear Jesus Christ call him by name, and not only so, but invite himself to his house? Surely, thinks Zaccheus, I dream: It cannot be; how should he know me? I never saw him before: Besides, I shall undergo much con-

tempt, if I receive him under my roof. Thus, I say, we may suppose Zaccheus thought within himself. But what faith the scripture? *I will make a willing people in the day of my power.* With this outward call, there went an efficacious power from God, which sweetly over-ruled his natural will: and therefore, ver. 6. *He made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully, not only into his house, but also into his heart.*

Thus it is the great God brings home his children. He calls them by name, by his word or providence; he speaks to them also by his Spirit. Hereby they are enabled to open their hearts, and are made willing to receive the King of glory. For Zaccheus's sake, let us not entirely condemn people that come under the word, out of no better principle than curiosity. Who knows but God may call them? It is good to be where the Lord is passing by. May all who are now present out of this principle, hear the voice of the Son of God speaking to their souls, and so hear that they may live! Not that men ought therefore to take encouragement to come out of curiosity. For perhaps a thousand more, at other times, came to see Christ out of curiosity, as well as Zaccheus, who were not effectually called by his grace. I only mention this for the encouragement of my own soul, and the consolation of God's children, who are too apt to be angry with those who do not attend on the word out of love to God: But let them alone. Brethren, pray for them. How do you know but Jesus Christ may speak to their hearts? A few words from Christ applied by his Spirit, will save their souls. *Zaccheus, says Christ, make haste and come down. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.*

I have observed in holy scripture, how particularly it is remarked, that persons rejoiced upon believing in Christ. Thus the converted Eunuch

went on his way rejoicing; thus the jailor rejoiced with his whole house; thus Zaccheus received Christ joyfully. And well may those rejoice who receive Jesus Christ; for with him they receive righteousness, sanctification, and eternal redemption. Many have brought up an ill report upon our good land, and would fain persuade people that religion will make them melancholy mad. So far from it, that joy is one ingredient of the kingdom of God in the heart of a believer; *the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*. To rejoice in the Lord, is a gospel-duty. *Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, rejoice*. And who can be so joyful, as those who know that their pardon is sealed before they go hence and are no more seen? The godly may, but I cannot see how any ungodly men can, rejoice: They cannot be truly cheerful. What if wicked men may sometimes have laughter amongst them? It is only the laughter of fools; in the midst of it there is heaviness; at the best, it is but like the crackling of thorns under a pot; It makes a blaze, but soon goes out. But, as for the godly, it is not so with them; their joy is solid and lasting. As it is a joy that a stranger intermeddleth not with, so it is a joy that no man taketh from them: It is a joy in God, a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

It should seem that Zaccheus was under soul-distress but a little while; perhaps (says Guthrie, in his book intituled, *The trial concerning a saving interest in Christ*) not above a quarter of an hour. I add, perhaps not so long: For, as one observes, sometimes the Lord Jesus delights to deliver speedily. God is a sovereign agent, and works upon his children in their effectual calling, according to the counsel of his eternal will. It is with the spiritual, as natural birth: All women have not the like pangs; all Christians have not the like degree of conviction. But all agree in this, that all

have Jesus Christ formed in their hearts: And those who have not so many trials at first, may be visited with the greater conflicts hereafter; though they never come into bondage again, after they have once received the Spirit of adoption. *We have not* (says Paul) *received the spirit of bondage again unto fear.* We know not what Zaccheus underwent before he died: However this one thing I know, he now believed in Christ, and was justified, or acquitted, and looked upon as righteous in God's sight, though a Publican, chief among the Publicans, not many moments before. And thus it is with all, that, like Zaccheus, receive Jesus Christ by faith into their hearts. The very moment they find rest in him, they are freely justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses; *for by grace are we saved, through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God.*

Say not within yourselves this is a licentious, Antinomian doctrine; for this faith, if true, will work by love, and be productive of the fruits of holiness. See an instance in this convert Zaccheus: No sooner had he received Jesus Christ by faith into his heart, but he evidences it by his works; For, ver. 8. we are told, *Zaccheus stood forth, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give unto the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.*

Having believed on Jesus in his heart, he now makes confession of him with his mouth to salvation. *Zaccheus stood forth:* He was not ashamed, but stood forth before his brother Publicans; for true faith casts out all servile, sinful fear of man; *And said, Behold, Lord.* It is remarkable, how readily people in scripture have owned the divinity of Christ immediately upon their conversion. Thus the woman at Jacob's well; *Is not this the Christ?* Thus the man born blind; *Lord, I believe; and worshipped him.* Thus Zaccheus, *Behold, Lord.* An

incontrovertible proof this to me, that those who deny our Lord's divinity, never effectually felt his power: If they had, they would not speak so lightly of him; they would scorn to deny his eternal power and Godhead. *Zaccheus stood forth, and said, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.* Noble fruits of a true living faith in the Lord Jesus! Every word calls for our notice. Not some small, not the tenth part, but the half. Of what? My goods; things that were valuable. My goods, his own, not another's: I give: Not, I will give when I die, when I can keep them no longer; but, I give now, even now. Zaccheus would be his own executor. For whilst we have time we should do good. But to whom would he give half of his goods? Not to the rich, not to those who were already clothed in purple and fine linen, of whom he might be recompensed again; but to the poor, the maimed, the halt, the blind, from which he could expect no recompence till the resurrection of the dead. *I give to the poor.* But knowing that he must be just, before he could be charitable, and conscious to himself that in his public administrations he had wronged many persons, he adds, *And if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.* Hear ye this, all ye that make no conscience of cheating the king of his taxes, or of buying or selling run goods. If ever God gives you true faith, you will never rest, till, like Zaccheus, you have made restitution to the utmost of your power. I suppose, before his conversion, he thought it no harm to cheat thus, no more than you may do now, and pleased himself frequently, to be sure, that he got rich by doing so: But now he is grieved for it at his heart; he confesses his injustice before men, and promises to make ample restitution. Go, ye cheating Publicans, learn of Zaccheus, go away

and do likewise; if you do not make restitution here, the Lord Jesus shall make you confess your sins before men and angels, and condemn you for it, when he comes in the glory of his Father to judgment hereafter.

After all this, with good reason might our Lord say unto him, *This day is salvation come to this house; forasmuch as he is the son of Abraham*; not so much by a natural as by a spiritual birth. He was made partaker of like precious faith with Abraham: Like Abraham, he believed on the Lord, and it was accounted to him for righteousness: His faith, like Abraham's, worked by love; and I doubt not, but he has been long since sitting in Abraham's harbour.

And now are you not ashamed of yourselves, who speak against the doctrines of grace, especially that doctrine of being justified by faith alone, as though it leded to licentiousness? What can be more unjust than such a charge? Is not the instance of Zaccheus a sufficient proof to the contrary? Have I strained it to serve my own turn? God forbid. To the best of my knowledge I have spoken the truth in sincerity, and the truth as it is in Jesus. I do affirm that we are saved by grace, and that we are justified by faith alone: But I do also affirm, that faith must be evidenced by good works, where there is an opportunity of performing them.

What therefore has been said of Zaccheus, may serve as a rule, whereby all may judge whether they have faith or not. You say you have faith; but how do you prove it? Did you ever hear the Lord Jesus call you by name? Were you ever made to obey that call? Did you ever, like Zaccheus, receive Jesus Christ joyfully into your hearts? Are you influenced, by the faith you say you have, to stand up and confess the Lord Jesus before men? Were you ever made willing to

own, and humble yourselves for, your past offences? Does your faith work by love, so that you conscientiously lay up, according as God has prospered you, for the support of the poor? Do you give alms of all things that you possess? And have you made due restitution to those you have wronged? If so, happy are ye; salvation is come to your souls; you are sons, you are daughters of, you shall shortly be everlastingly blessed with, faithful Abraham. But, if you are not thus minded, do not deceive your own souls; though you may talk of justification by faith, like angels, it will do you no good; it will only increase your damnation. You hold the truth, but it is in unrighteousness: Your faith being without works, is dead; you have the devil, not Abraham, for your father. Unless you get a faith of the heart, a faith working by love, with devils and damned spirits shall you dwell for evermore.

But it is time now to enforce the latter part of the text; *For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.* These words are spoken by our Saviour, in answer to some self-righteous Pharisees, who, instead of rejoicing with the angels in heaven, at the conversion of such a sinner, murmured, *that he was gone to be a guest with a man that was a sinner.* To vindicate his conduct, he tells them, that this was an act agreeable to the design of his coming; *For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.* He might have said, the Son of God. But O the wonderful condescension of our Redeemer! He delights to stile himself the *Son of man.* He came not only to save, but to seek and to save that which was lost. He came to Jericho to seek and save Zaccheus; for otherwise Zaccheus would never have been saved by him. But from whence came he? Even from heaven, his dwelling-place, to this lower earth, this vale of tears, to seek and save that which was lost; or

all that feel themselves lost, and are willing, like Zaccheus, to receive him into their hearts to save them; with how great a salvation? even from the guilt, and also from the power of their sins; to make them heirs of God, and joint-heirs with himself, and partakers of that glory which he enjoyed with the Father before the world began. Thus will the Son of man save that which is lost. He was made the Son of man, on purpose that he might save them. He had no other end but this in leaving his Father's throne, in obeying the moral law, and hanging upon the cross: All that was done and suffered, merely to satisfy, and procure a righteousness for poor, lost, undone sinners, and that too without respect of persons. *That which was lost*; all of every nation and language, that feel, bewail, and are truly desirous of being delivered from their lost state, did the Son of man come down to seek and to save: For he is mighty, not only so, but willing, to save to the uttermost all that come to God through him. He will in nowise cast them out. For he is the same to-day, as he was yesterday. He comes now to sinners, as well as formerly; and, I hope, hath sent me out this day to seek, and, under him, to bring home some of you, the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

What say you? Shall I go home rejoicing, saying, that many, like sheep, have went astray, but they have now believed on Jesus Christ, and so returned home to the great Shepherd and Bishop of their souls? If the Lord would be pleased thus to prosper my handy-work, I care not how many legalists and self-righteous Pharisees murmur against me, for offering salvation to the worst of sinners: For I know the Son of man came to seek and to save them; and the Lord Jesus will now be a guest to the worst Publican, the vilest sinner that is amongst you, if he does but believe on him. Make haste then, O sinners, make haste, and come by

faith to Christ. Then, this day, even this hour, nay this moment, if you believe, Jesus Christ shall come and make his eternal abode in your hearts. Which of you is made willing to receive the King of glory? Which of you obeys the call, as Zaccheus did? Alas! why do you stand still? How know you, whether Jesus Christ may ever call you again? Come then, poor, guilty sinners; come away, poor, lost, undone Publicans: Make haste, I say, and come away to Jesus Christ. The Lord condescends to invite himself to come under the filthy roofs of the houses of your souls. Do not be afraid of entertaining him; he will fill you with all peace and joy in believing. Do not be ashamed to run before the multitude, and to have all manner of evil spoken against you falsely for his sake: One sight of Christ will make amends for all. Zaccheus was laughed at; and *all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.* But what of that? Zaccheus is now crowned in glory; as you also shall shortly be, if you believe on, and are reproached for Christ's sake. Do not, therefore, put me off with frivolous excuses: There is no excuse can be given for your not coming to Christ. You are lost, undone, without him; and if he is not glorified in your salvation, he will be glorified in your destruction; if he does not come and make his abode in your hearts, you must take up an eternal abode with the devil and his angels. O that the Lord would be pleased to pass by some of you at this time! O that he may call you by his Spirit, and make you a willing people in this day of his power! For I know my calling will not do, unless he, by his efficacious grace, compel you to come in. O that you once felt what it is to receive Jesus Christ into your hearts! You would soon, like Zaccheus, give him every thing. You do not love Christ, because you do not know him; you do not come to him, because you do not feel your want of him:

You are whole and not broken-hearted; you are not sick, at least not sensible of your sickness; and, therefore, no wonder you do not apply to Jesus Christ, that great, that almighty physician. You do not feel yourselves lost, and therefore do not seek to be found in Christ. O that God would wound you with the sword of his Spirit, and cause his arrows of conviction to stick deep in your hearts! O that he would dart a ray of divine light into your souls! For if you do not feel yourselves lost without Christ, you are of all men most miserable: Your souls are dead; you are not only an image of hell, but in some degree hell itself: You carry hell about with you, and you know it not. O that I could see some of you sensible of this, and hear you cry out, "Lord, break this hard heart; Lord, deliver me from the body of this death; draw me, Lord, make me willing to come after thee; I am lost; Lord, save me, or I perish!" Was this your case, how soon would the Lord stretch forth his almighty hand, and say, be of good cheer, it is I; be not afraid? What a wonderful calm would then possess your troubled souls! Your fellowship would then be with the Father and the Son: Your life would be hid with Christ in God.

Some of you, I hope, have experienced this, and can say, I was lost, but I am found; I was dead, but am alive again: The Son of man came and sought me in the day of his power, and saved my sinful soul. And do you repent that you came to Christ? Has he not been a good Master? Is not his presence sweet to your souls? Has he not been faithful to his promise? And have you not found, that even in doing and suffering for him, there is an exceeding present great reward? I am persuaded you will answer, Yes. O then, ye saints, recommend and talk of the love of Christ to others, and tell them, O tell them, what great things the Lord has done for you! This may encourage others to

come unto him. And who knows but the Lord may make you fishers of men? The story of Zaccheus was left on record for this purpose. No truly convicted soul, after such an instance of divine grace has been laid before him, need despair of mercy. What if you are Publicans? Was not Zaccheus a Publican? What if you are chief among the Publicans? Was not Zaccheus likewise? What if you are rich? Was not Zaccheus rich also? And yet almighty grace made him more than conqueror over all these hindrances. All things are possible to Jesus Christ; nothing is too hard for him: He is the Lord almighty. Our mountains of sin must all fall before this great Zerubbabel. On him God the Father has laid the iniquities of all that shall believe on him; and in his own body he bore them on the tree. There, there, by faith, O mourners in Sion, may you see your Saviour hanging with arms stretched out, and hear him, as it were, thus speaking to your souls; "Behold how I have loved you! Behold my hands and my feet! Look, look into my wounded side, and see a heart flaming with love; Love stronger than death. Come into my arms, O sinners, come wash your spotted souls in my heart's blood. See here is a fountain opened for all sin and all uncleanness! See, O guilty souls, how the wrath of God is now abiding upon you: Come, haste away, and hide yourselves in the clefts of my wounds; for I am wounded for your transgressions; I am dying that you may live for evermore. Behold, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so I am here lifted up, that whosoever believeth in me, shall not perish, but have eternal life. See how I am become a curse for you: The chastisement of your peace is upon me. I am thus scourged, thus wounded, thus crucified, that you by my stripes may be healed. O look unto me all ye trembling sinners, even to the ends of the earth! Look unto me by faith, and you shall be saved."

"For I came thus to be obedient even unto death,
"that I might save that which was lost."

And what say you to this, O sinners? Suppose you saw the King of glory dying, and thus speaking to you; would you believe on him? No, you would not, unless you believe on him now: For though he is dead, he yet speaketh all this in the scripture; nay, in effect, says all this in the words of the text, *The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost.* Do not therefore any longer crucify the Lord of glory: Bring those rebels, your sins, which will not have him to reign over them, bring them out to him: Though you cannot slay them yourselves, yet he will slay them for you. The power of his death and resurrection is as great now as formerly. Make haste therefore, make haste, O ye Publicans and sinners, and give the dear Lord Jesus your hearts, your whole hearts. If you refuse to hearken to this call of the Lord, remember your damnation will be just: I am free from the blood of you all: You must acquit my Master and me at the terrible day of judgment. O that you may know the things that belong to your everlasting peace, before they are eternally hid from your eyes! Let all that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity say, *Amen.*

S E R M O N X.

The Power of Christ's Resurrection.

PHILIP. iii. 10.

That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection.

THE apostle, in the verses before the text, had been cautioning the Philippians to beware of

the concision, judaizing teachers, who endeavour-
ed to subvert them from the simplicity of the go-
spel, by telling them, they still ought to be subject
to circumcision, and all the other ordinances of
Moses. And that they might not think he spoke
out of prejudice, and condemned their tenets, be-
cause he himself was a stranger to the Jewish dis-
pensation, he acquaints them, that if any other man
thought he had whereof he might trust in the flesh,
or seek to be justified by the outward privileges of
the Jews, he had more: For he was circumcised
the eighth day; of the stock of Israel, (not a profe-
lyte, but a native Israelite;) of the tribe of Benja-
min, (the tribe which adhered to Judah when the
others revolted;) an Hebrew of the Hebrews, (a
Jew both on the father's and mother's side;) and as
touching the law, a Pharisee, the strictest sect a-
mongst all Israel. To shew that he was no Gallio in
religion, through his great, though misguided zeal,
he had persecuted the church of Christ; and as
touching the righteousness of the law (as far as the
Pharisees exposition of it went) he was blameless,
and had kept it from his youth. But, when it plea-
sed God, who separated him from his mother's
womb, to reveal his Son in him, *What things were*
gain to me, (he says) *those privileges I boasted my-*
self in, and sought to be justified by, I counted loss
for Christ. And that they might not think he re-
pented that he had done so, he tells them, he was
now more confirmed than ever in his judgment.
For, says he, *yea doubtless,* (the expression in the o-
riginal rises with a holy triumph) *and I do count all*
things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ
Jesus my Lord. And that they might not object that
he said, and did not, he acquaints them, he had given
proofs of the sincerity of these professions, because
for the sake of them, he had suffered the loss of all his
worldly things, and still was willing to do more;
for, *I count them but dung* (no more than offals thrown

out to dogs) *so that I may win*, (or have a saving interest in) *Christ, and be found in him*, (as the manslayer in the city of refuge) *not having my own righteousness, which is of the law*, (not depending on having Abraham for my father, or on any works of righteousness which I have done, either to atone or serve as a balance for my evil deeds) *but that which is through the faith of Christ*, the righteousness which is of God by faith, a righteousness of God's appointing, and which will be imputed to me, if I believe in Christ, *that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection*; that I may have an experimental knowledge of the efficacy of his resurrection, by feeling the influences of his blessed Spirit on my soul. In which words two things are implied.

First, That Jesus Christ did rise from the dead.

Secondly, That it highly concerns us to know the power of his rising again.

Accordingly in the following discourse I shall endeavour to shew,

First, That Christ is risen indeed from the dead; and that it was necessary for him so to do; and,

Secondly, That it highly concerns us to know and experience the power of his resurrection.

First, Christ is indeed risen.

That Jesus should rise from the dead was absolutely necessary.

1. *First*, On his own account. He had often appealed to this as the last and most convincing proof he would give them that he was the true Messiah, *There shall no other sign be given you, than the sign of the prophet Jonas*. And again, *Destroy this temple of my body, and in three days I will build it up*. Which words his enemies remembered, and urged it as an argument, to induce Pilate to grant them a watch, to prevent his being stolen out of the grave. *We know that deceiver said, whilst he was yet alive, after three days I will rise again*. So that had he not ri-

fen again, they might have justly said, we know that this man was an impostor.

2. *Secondly*, It was necessary on our account. *He rose again*, says the apostle, *for our justification*; or that the debt we owed to God for our sins, might be fully satisfied and discharged.

It had pleased the Father (for ever adored be his infinite love and free-grace) to wound his only Son for our transgressions, and to arrest and confine him in the prison of the grave, as our Surety for the guilt we had contracted by setting at nought his commandments. Now had Christ continued always in the grave, we could have had no more assurance that our sins were satisfied for, than any common debtor can have of his creditor's being satisfied, whilst his surety is kept confined. But he being released from the power of death, we are thereby assured, that with his sacrifice God was well pleased, that our atonement was finished on the cross, and that he had made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the world.

3. *Thirdly*, It was necessary that our Lord Jesus should rise again from the dead, to assure us of the certainty of the resurrection of our own bodies.

The doctrine of the resurrection of the body was entirely exploded and set at nought among the Gentiles, as appears from the Athenians mocking at, and calling St. Paul a babbler and a setter forth of strange doctrines, when he preached to them Jesus, and the resurrection. And though it was believed by most of the Jews, as is evident from many passages of scripture, yet not by all; the whole sect of the Sadducees denied it. But the resurrection of Jesus Christ put it out of dispute. For as he acted as our Representative, if he our Head be risen, then must we also, who are his members, rise with him. And as in the first Adam

we all died, even so in him our second Adam we must all, in this sense, be made alive.

As it was necessary, upon these accounts, that our blessed Lord should rise from the dead; so it is plain beyond contradiction, that he did. Never was any matter of fact better attested; never were more precautions made use of to prevent a cheat. He was buried in a sepulchre, hewn out of a rock, so that it could not be said that any digged under, and conveyed him away. It was a sepulchre also wherein never man before was laid; so that if any body did rise from thence, it must be the body of Jesus of Nazareth. Besides, the sepulchre was sealed; a great stone rolled over the mouth of it; and a band of soldiers (consisting not of friends, but of his professed enemies) was set to guard it. And as for his disciples coming by night and stealing him away, it was altogether improbable: For it was not long since, that they had all forsaken him, and they were the most backward in believing his resurrection. And supposing it was true that they came whilst the soldiers slept; yet the soldiers must be cast into a deep sleep indeed, that the rolling away so great a stone did not awake some of them.

And our blessed Lord's afterwards appearing at sundry times, and in divers manners, to his disciples, as when they were assembled together, when they were walking to Emmaus, when they were fishing; nay, and condescending to shew them his hands and feet, and his appearing to above five hundred brethren at once, put the truth of his resurrection out of all dispute.

Indeed there is one objection that may be made against what has been said, that the books wherein these facts are recorded were written by his disciples.

And who more proper persons than those who were eye-witnesses of what they related, and eat and drank with him after his resurrection? "But they

"were illiterate and ignorant men." Yet as good witnesses of a plain matter of fact, as the most learned masters in Israel. Nay, this rendered them more proper witnesses. For being plain men, they were therefore less to be suspected of telling or making a lie, particularly, since they laid down their lives for a testimony of the truth of it. We read indeed of Jacob's telling a lie, though he was a plain man, in order to get his father's blessing. But it was never heard since the world began, that any man, much less a whole set of men, died martyrs, for the sake of an untruth, when they themselves were to reap no advantage from it.

No, this single circumstance proves them to be Israelites indeed, in whom was no guile. And the wonderful success God gave to their ministry afterwards, when three thousand were converted by one sermon; and twelve poor fishermen, in a very short time enabled to be more than conquerors over all the opposition men or devils could make, was as plain a demonstration, that Christ was risen, according to their gospel, as that a divine power, at the sound of a few rams horns, caused the walls of Jericho to fall down.

But what need we any farther witnesses? Believe you the resurrection of our blessed Lord? I know that you believe it, as your gathering together on this first day of the week in the courts of the Lord's house abundantly testifies.

What concerns us most to be assured of, and which is the

Second thing I was to speak to, is, Whether we have experimentally known the power of his resurrection; that is, Whether or not we have received the Holy Ghost, and by his powerful operations on our hearts have been raised from the death of sin, to a life of righteousness, and true holiness.

It was this, the great apostle was chiefly desirous

to know: The resurrection of Christ's body he was satisfied would avail him nothing, unless he experienced the power of it in raising his dead soul.

For another, and that a chief end of our blessed Lord's rising from the dead, was to enter heaven as our representative, and to send down the Holy Ghost to apply that redemption he had finished on the cross, to our hearts, by working an entire change in them.

Without this, Christ would have died in vain. For it would have done us no service to have had his outward righteousness imputed to us, unless we had an inward inherent righteousness wrought in us. Because, being altogether conceived and born in sin, and consequently unfit to hold communion with an infinitely pure and holy God, we cannot possibly be made meet to see or enjoy him, till a thorough renovation has passed upon our hearts.

Without this, we leave out the Holy Ghost in the great work of our redemption. But as we were made by the joint concurrence and consultation of the blessed Trinity; and as we were baptized in their name, so must all of them concur in our salvation: As the Father made, and the Son redeemed, so must the Holy Ghost sanctify and seal us, or otherwise we have believed in vain.

This then is what the apostle means by the power of Christ's resurrection, and this is what we are as much concerned experimentally to know, as that he rose at all.

Without this, though we may be moralists, though we may be civilized, good-natured people, yet we are no Christians. For he is not a true Christian, who is only one outwardly; nor have we therefore a right, because we daily profess to believe that Christ rose again the third day from the dead. But he is a true Christian who is one inwardly, and then only can we be stiled true believers, when

we not only profess to believe, but have felt the power of our blessed Lord's rising from the dead, by being quickened and raised by his Spirit, when dead in trespasses and sins, to a thorough newness both of heart and life.

The devils themselves cannot but believe the doctrine of the resurrection, and tremble; but yet they continue devils, because the benefits of this resurrection have not been applied to them, nor have they received a renovating power from it, to change and put off their diabolical nature. And so, unless we not only profess to know, but also feel that Christ is risen indeed, by being born again from above, we shall be as far from the kingdom of God as they: Our faith will be as ineffectual as the faith of devils.

Nothing has done more harm to the Christian world, nothing has rendered the cross of Christ of less effect, than a vain supposition, that religion is something without us: Whereas we should consider, that every thing that Christ did outwardly, must be done over again in our souls; or otherwise, the believing there was such a divine Person once on earth, who triumphed over hell and the grave, will profit us no more than believing there was once such a person as Alexander, who conquered the world.

As Christ was born of the Virgin's womb, so must he be spiritually formed in our hearts. As he died for sin, so must we die to sin. And as he rose again from the dead, so must we also rise to a divine life.

None but those who have followed him in this regeneration, or new-birth, shall sit on thrones as approvers of his sentence, when he shall come in terrible majesty to judge the twelve tribes of Israel.

It is true, as for the outward work of our redemption, it was a transient act, and was certainly finished on the cross; but the application of that

redemption to our hearts, is a work that will continue always, even unto the end of the world.

So long as there is an elect man breathing on the earth, who is naturally engendered of the offspring of the first Adam, so long must the quickening Spirit, which was purchased by the resurrection of the second Adam, that Lord from heaven, be breathing upon his soul.

For though we may exist by Christ, yet we cannot be said to exist in him, till we are united to him by one spirit, and enter into a new state of things, as certainly as he entered into a new state of things, after that he rose from the dead.

We may throng and crowd round about Christ, and call him *Lord, Lord*, when we come to worship before his footstool; but we have not effectually touched him, till by a lively faith in his resurrection, we perceive a divine virtue coming out of him, to renew and purify our souls.

How greatly then do they err who rest in a bare historical faith of our Saviour's resurrection, and look only for external proofs to evidence it? Whereas were we the most learned disputers of this world, and could speak of the certainty of this fact with the tongue of men and angels, yet without this inward testimony of it in our hearts, though we might convince others, yet we should never be saved by it ourselves.

For we are but dead men, we are like so many carcases wrapt up in grave clothes, till that same Jesus who called Lazarus from his tomb, and at whose own resurrection many that slept arose, doth raise us also by his quickening Spirit from our natural death, in which we have so long lain, to a holy and heavenly life.

We might think ourselves happy, if we had seen the holy Jesus after he was risen from the dead, and our hands had handled that Lord of life. But more happy are they who have not seen him, and

yet having felt the power of his resurrection, therefore believe in him. For many saw our divine Master, who were not saved by him; but whosoever has thus felt the power of his resurrection, has the earnest of his inheritance in his heart, he has passed from death to life, and shall never fall into final condemnation.

I am very sensible that this is foolishness to the natural man, as were many such like truths to our Lord's own disciples, when only weak in faith, before he rose again. But when these natural men, like them, have fully felt the power of his resurrection, they will then own that this doctrine is from God, and say with the Samaritans, *Now we believe not because of thy saying*, for we ourselves have experienced it in our hearts.

And O that all unbelievers, all letter-learned masters of Israel, who now look upon the doctrine of the power of Christ's resurrection, or our new-birth, as an idle tale, and condemn the preachers of it as enthusiasts and madmen, did but thus feel the power of it in their souls, they would no longer ask, how this thing could be? But they would be convinced of it as much as Thomas was, when he saw the Lord's Christ; and like him, when Jesus bid him reach out his hands and thrust them into his side, in a holy confusion they would cry out, *My Lord, and my God!*

But how shall an unbeliever, how shall the formal Christian come thus to *know Christ, and the power of his resurrection?* God, who cannot lie, has told us, *I am the resurrection and the life, whosoever liveth and believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.* Again says the apostle, *By faith we are saved, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God.*

This, this is the way, walk in it. Believe, and you shall live in Christ, and Christ in you; you shall be one with Christ, and Christ one with you. But

without this, your outward goodness and professions will avail you nothing.

But then, by this faith we are not to understand a dead speculative faith, a faith in the head; but a living principle wrought in the heart by the powerful operations of the Holy Ghost, a faith that will enable us to overcome the world, and forsake all in affection for Jesus Christ. For thus speaks our blessed Master, *Unless a man forsake all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.*

And so the apostle, in the words immediately following the text, says, *being made conformable to his death*; thereby implying, that we cannot know the power of Christ's resurrection unless we are made conformable to him in his death.

This we have shadowed out by the custom of baptizing by immersion in the primitive church, and (which is also recommended by our own) their putting the infants under the water, signified their obligation to die unto sin; as their taking them out of the water, signified their rising again to newness of life. To which the apostle plainly alludes, when he says, *we are buried with him in baptism.*

If we can reconcile light and darkness, heaven and hell, then we may hope to know the power of Christ's resurrection without dying to ourselves and the world. But till we can do this, we might as well expect that Christ will have concord with Belial.

For there is such a contrariety between the spirit of this world, and the Spirit of Jesus Christ, that he who will be at friendship with the one, must be at enmity with the other: *We cannot serve God and mammon.*

This may, indeed, seem a hard saying, and many, with the young man in the gospel, may be tempted to go away sorrowful: But wherefore should this offend them? For what is all that is in the world, the

lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, but vanity and vexation of spirit?

God is love; and therefore, could our own wills, or the world, have made us happy, he never would have sent his own dear Son Jesus Christ to die and rise again, to deliver us from the power of them. But because they only torment and cannot satisfy, therefore God bids us to renounce them.

Had any one persuaded profane Esau not to lose so glorious a privilege, merely for the sake of gratifying a present corrupt inclination, when he saw him about to sell his birth-right for a little red pottage, would not one think that man to have been Esau's friend! And just thus stands the case between God and us. By the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are new-born to an heavenly inheritance amongst all them which are sanctified; but our own corrupt wills would tempt us to sell this glorious birth-right for the vanities of the world, which, like Esau's red pottage, may please us for a while, but will soon be taken away from us. God knows this, and therefore rather bids us renounce them for a season, than for the short enjoyment of them lose the privilege of that glorious birth-right, to which, by knowing the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are entitled.

O the depth of the riches and excellency of Christianity! Well might the great St. Paul count all things but dung and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of it. Well might he desire so ardently to know Jesus, and the power of his resurrection. For even on this side eternity it raises us above the world, and makes us to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Well might that glorious company of worthies, recorded in the holy scriptures, supported with a deep sense of their heavenly calling, despise the pleasures and profits of this life, and wander about in sheep-skins, and goats-skins, in dens and caves

of the earth, being destitute, afflicted, tormented.

And O that we were all like-minded! that we felt the power of Christ's resurrection as they did! How should we then count all things as dung and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord! How should we then recover our primitive dignity, trample the earth under our feet, and with our souls be continually gasping after God.

And what hinders but we may be thus minded? Is Jesus Christ, our great High-Priest, altered from what he was? No, he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. And though he is exalted to the right-hand of God, yet he is not ashamed to call us brethren. The power of his resurrection is as great now as formerly, and the Holy Spirit, which was assured to us by his resurrection, as ready and able to quicken us who are dead in trespasses and sins, as any saint that ever lived. Let us but cry, and that instantly, to him that is mighty and able to save; let us, in sincerity and truth, without secretly keeping back the least part, renounce ourselves and the world; then we shall be Christians indeed. And though the world may cast us out, and separate from our company, yet Jesus Christ will walk with, and abide in us. And at the general resurrection of the last day, when the voice of the archangel and trump of God shall bid the sea and the graves to give up their dead, and all nations shall appear before him, then will he confess us before his Father and the holy angels, and we shall receive that invitation which he shall then pronounce to all who love and fear him, *Come, ye blessed children of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world.*

Grant this, O Father, for thy dear Son's sake, Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, &c.

S E R M O N XL

The Indwelling of the Spirit, the common
Privilege of all Believers.

JOHN vii. 37, 38, 39.

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood, and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.

NOTHING has rendered the cross of Christ of less effect; nothing has been a greater stumbling-block and rock of offence to weak minds, than a supposition, now current among us, that most of what is contained in the gospel of Jesus Christ, was designed only for our Lord's first and immediate followers, and consequently calculated but for one or two hundred years. Accordingly, many now read the life, sufferings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, in the same manner as Cæsar's Commentaries, or the conquests of Alexander are read. As things rather intended to afford matter for speculation, than to be acted over again in and by us.

As this is true of the doctrines of the gospel in general, so it is of the operation of God's Spirit upon the hearts of believers in particular; for we no sooner mention the necessity of our receiving the *Holy Ghost* in these last days, as well as formerly, but we are looked upon by some, as enthusiasts and madmen; and by others, represented as wil-

fully deceiving the people, and undermining the established constitution of the church.

Judge ye then, whether it is not high time for the true ministers of Jesus Christ, who have been made partakers of this heavenly gift, to lift up their voices like a trumpet; and if they would not have those souls perish, for which the Lord Jesus has shed his precious blood, to declare with all boldness, that the holy Spirit is the common privilege and portion of all believers in all ages; and that we, as well as the first Christians, must receive the *Holy Ghost*, before we can be truly called the children of God.

For this reason, (and also that I might answer the design of our church in appointing the present festival *) I have chosen the words of the text.

They were spoken by Jesus Christ, when he was at the Feast of Tabernacles. Our Lord attended on the temple-service in general, and the festivals of the Jewish Church in particular. The festival at which he was now present, was that of the Feast of Tabernacles, which the Jews observed according to God's appointment in commemoration of their living in tents. At the last day of this feast, it was customary for many pious people to fetch water from a certain place, and bring it on their heads, singing this anthem out of Isaiah, "And with joy shall they draw water out of the wells of salvation." Our Lord Jesus observing this, and it being his constant practice to spiritualize every thing he met with, cries out, *If any man thirst, let him come unto me (rather than unto that well) and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath spoken, (where it is said, God will make water to spring out of a dry rock, and such like) out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.* And that we might know what our Saviour meant by this living water, the evangelist immediately adds, *But this spake he*

* Whitsun-tide.

of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.

The last words I shall chiefly insist on in the ensuing discourse: And

First, I shall briefly shew, what is meant by the word Spirit.

Secondly, That this Spirit is the common privilege of all believers.

Thirdly, I shall shew the reason on which this doctrine is founded. And

Lastly, Conclude with a general exhortation to believe on Jesus Christ, whereby alone we can receive this Spirit.

First, I am to shew what is meant by the word Spirit.

By the Spirit, is evidently to be understood the Holy Ghost, the third person in the ever-blessed Trinity, consubstantial and co-eternal with the Father and the Son, proceeding from, yet equal to them both. For, to use the words of our church in this day's office, that which we believe of the glory of the Father, the same we believe of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, without any difference or inequality.

Thus, says St. John, in his first epistle, chap. v. ver. 7. *There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.* And our Lord, when he gave his apostles commission to go and teach all nations, commanded them to baptize in the name of the Holy Ghost, as well as of the Father and the Son. And St. Peter, Acts v. 3. said to Ananias, *Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie unto the Holy Ghost?* and ver. 4. he says, *Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.* From all which passages, it is plain, that the Holy Ghost is truly and properly God, as well as the Father and the Son. This is an unspeakable mystery, but a mystery of God's revealing, and, therefore to be assented to with our whole hearts:

Seeing God is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should deceive. I proceed,

Secondly, To prove, that the Holy Ghost is the common privilege of all believers.

But, here I would not be understood of so receiving the Holy Ghost, as to enable us to work miracles, or shew outward signs and wonders. I allow our adversaries, that to pretend to be inspired in this sense, is being wise above what is written. Perhaps it cannot be proved, that God ever interposed in this extraordinary manner, but when some new revelation was to be established, as at the first settling of the Mosaic and gospel dispensation: And as for my own part, I cannot but suspect the spirit of those who insist upon a repetition of such miracles at this time. For the world being now become nominally Christian, (though, God knows, little of the power is left among us) there need not outward miracles, but only an inward co-operation of the Holy Spirit with the word, to prove that Jesus is the Messiah which was to come into the world.

Besides, if it was possible for thee, O man, to have faith, so as to be able to remove mountains, or cast out devils; nay, couldst thou speak with the tongue of men and angels, yea, and bid the sun stand still in the midst of heaven; what would all these gifts of the Spirit avail thee, without being made partaker of his sanctifying graces? Saul had the spirit of government for a while, so as to become another man, and yet probably was a cast-away. And many, who cast out devils in Christ's name, at the last will be disowned by him. If, therefore, thou hadst only the gifts, and was destitute of the graces of the Holy Ghost, they would only serve to lead thee with so much the more solemnity to hell.

Here then we join issue with our adversaries, and will readily grant, that we are not in this sense

to be inspired, as were our Lord's first apostles. But unless men have eyes which see not, and ears that hear not, how can they read the latter part of the text, and not confess that the Holy Spirit, in another sense, is the common privilege of all believers, even to the end of the world? *This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.* Observe, he does not say, they that believe on him for one or two ages, but they that believe on him in general, or, at all times, and in all places. So that, unless we can prove, that St. John was under a delusion when he wrote these words, we must believe that even we also, shall receive the Holy Ghost, if we believe on the Lord Jesus with our whole hearts.

Again, our Lord, just before his bitter passion, when he was about to offer up his soul an offering for the sins of the elect world; when his heart was most enlarged, and he would undoubtedly demand the most excellent gifts for his disciples, prays, *That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us, I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one;* that is, that all his true followers might be united to him by his Holy Spirit, by as real, vital, and mystical an union, as there was between Jesus Christ and the Father. I say all his true followers; for it is evident, from our Lord's own words, that he had us, and all believers in view, when he put up this prayer; *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;* so that, unless we treat our Lord as the high priests did, and count him a blasphemer, we must confess, that all who believe in Jesus Christ, through the word, or ministrations of his servants, are to be joined to Jesus Christ, by being made partakers of the Holy Spirit.

A great noise hath been made of late, about the word enthusiast, and it has been cast upon the

preachers of the gospel, as a term of reproach; but every Christian, in the proper sense of the word, must be an enthusiast; that is, must be inspired of God, or have God, by his Spirit, in him. St. Peter tells us, we have many great and precious promises, that we may be made partakers of the divine nature; our Lord prays, *that we may be one, as the Father and he are one*; and our own church, in conformity to these texts of scripture, in her excellent communion-office, tells us, that those who receive the sacrament worthily, “Dwell in Christ, and Christ in them; that they are one with Christ, and Christ with them.” And yet, Christians must have their names cast out as evil, and ministers in particular, must be looked upon as deceivers of the people, for affirming, that we must be really united to God, by receiving the Holy Ghost. *Be astonished, O heavens, at this!*

Indeed, I will not say, all our letter-learned preachers deny this doctrine in express words; but however, they do in effect; for they talk professed against inward feelings, and say, we may have God's Spirit without feeling it, which is in reality to deny the thing itself. And had I a mind to hinder the progress of the gospel, and to establish the kingdom of darkness, I would go about telling people, they might have the Spirit of God, and yet not feel it.

But to return: When our Lord was about to ascend to his Father and our Father, to his God and our God, he gave his apostles this commission, *Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* And accordingly, by authority of this commission, we do teach and baptize in this, and every age of the church. And though we translate the words, *baptizing them in the name*; yet, as the name of God, in the Lord's prayer, and several other places, signifies his nature, they might as well be

translated thus, *baptizing them into the nature of the Father, into the nature of the Son, and into the nature of the Holy Ghost.* Consequently, if we are all to be baptized into the nature of the Holy Ghost, before our baptism be effectual to salvation, it is evident, that we all must actually receive the Holy Ghost, and ere we can say, we truly believe in Jesus Christ. For no one can say, that Jesus is my Lord, but he that has thus received the Holy Ghost.

Numbers of other texts might be quoted to make this doctrine, if possible, still more plain; but I am astonished, that any who call themselves members; much more, that many, who are preachers in the church of England, should dare so much as to open their lips against it. And yet, with grief I speak it, God is my judge, persons of the established church seem more generally to be ignorant of it than any dissenters whatsoever.

But, my dear brethren, what have you been doing? How often have your hearts given your lips the lie? How often have you offered to God the sacrifice of fools, and had your prayers turned into sin, if you approve of, and use our church-liturgy, and yet deny the Holy Spirit to be the portion of all believers? In the daily absolution, the minister exhorts the people to pray, that "God would grant them repentance, and his Holy Spirit;" In the Collect for Christmas-day, we beseech God, "that he would daily renew us by his Holy Spirit." In the last week's Collect, we prayed "that we may evermore rejoice in the comforts of the Holy Ghost;" and in the concluding prayer, which we put up every day, we pray, not only that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, but that "the fellowship of the Holy Ghost" may be with us all evermore.

But farther, a solemn season, to some, is now approaching; I mean the Ember-days, at the end

of which, all that are to be ordained to the office of a deacon, are in the sight of God, and in the presence of the congregation, to declare, that they trust they are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, to take upon them that administration; and to those who are to be ordained priests, the bishop is to repeat these solemn words, "Receive thou the Holy Ghost, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands." And yet, O that I had no reason to speak it, many that use our good forms, and many who have witnessed this good confession, yet dare to both talk and preach against the necessity of receiving the Holy Ghost now; and not only so, but cry out against those, who do insist upon it, as madmen, enthusiasts, schismatics, and underminers of the established constitution.

But you are the schismatics, you are the bane of the church of England, who are always crying out, *the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord*; and yet starve the people out of our communion, by feeding them only with the dry husks of dead morality, and not bringing out to them the fatted calf; I mean, the doctrines of the operations of the blessed Spirit of God. But here is the misfortune; many of us are not led by, and therefore no wonder that we cannot talk feelingly of, the Holy Ghost; we subscribe to our articles, and make them serve for a key to get into church-preferment, and then preach contrary to those very articles to which we have subscribed. Far be it from me, to charge all the clergy with this hateful hypocrisy; no, blessed be God, there are some left among us, who dare maintain the doctrines of the reformation, and preach the truth as it is in Jesus: But I speak the truth in Christ, I lye not; the generality of the clergy are fallen from our articles, and do not speak agreeable to them, or to the form of sound words delivered in the scriptures; wo be unto such blind leaders of the blind! How can you escape the

damnation of hell? It is not all your learning, (falsely so called) it is not all your preferments can keep you from the just judgment of God. Yet a little while, and we shall all appear before the tribunal of Christ; there, there will I meet you; there Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, shall determine who are the false prophets, who are the wolves in sheep's cloathing. Those who say, that we must now receive and feel the Holy Ghost, or those who exclaim against it, as the doctrine of devils.

But I can say no more; it is an unpleasing task to censure any order of men, especially those who are in the ministry; nor would any thing excuse it but necessity: That necessity which extorted from our Lord himself so many woes against the Scribes and Pharisees, the letter-learned rulers and teachers of the Jewish church; and surely, if I could bear to see people perish for lack of knowledge, and yet be silent towards those who keep from them the key of true knowledge, the very stones would cry out.

Would we restore the church to its primitive dignity, the only way is to live and preach the doctrine of Christ, and the articles to which we have subscribed; then we shall find the number of dissenters will daily decrease, and the church of England become the joy of the whole earth.

I am, in the *Third* place, to shew the reasonableness of this doctrine.

I say, the reasonableness of this doctrine; for however it may seem foolishness to the natural man, yet to those, who have tasted of the good word of life, and have felt the power of the world to come, it will appear to be founded on the highest reason; and is capable to those who have eyes to see, even of a demonstration; I say of demonstration, for it stands on this self-evident truth, that we are fallen creatures, or, to use the scripture-expression, *Have all died in Adam.*

I know indeed, it is now no uncommon thing amongst us, to deny the doctrine of original sin, as well as the divinity of Jesus Christ; but it is incumbent on those who deny it, first to disprove the authority of the holy scriptures; if thou canst prove thou unbeliever, that the book, which we call the Bible, does not contain the lively oracles of God; if thou canst shew, that holy men of old did not write this book, as they were inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, then will we give up the doctrine of original sin; but unless thou canst do this, we must insist upon it, that we are all conceived and born in sin; if for no other, yet for this one reason, because that God, who cannot lie, has told us so.

But what has light to do with darkness, or polite infidels with the Bible! Alas! as they are strangers to the power, so they are generally as great strangers to the word of God. And therefore, if we will preach to them, we must preach to and from the heart: For talking in the language of scripture, to them, is but like talking in an unknown tongue. Tell me then, O man, whosoever thou art, that deniest the doctrine of original sin, if thy conscience be not seared as with a hot iron: Tell me, if thou dost not find thyself, by nature, to be a motely mixture of brute and devil? I know these terms will stir up the whole Pharisee in thy heart! But let not Satan hurry thee hence: Stop a little, and let us reason together; dost thou not find, that by nature thou art prone to pride? otherwise, wherefore art thou now offended? Again, dost not thou find in thyself the seeds of malice, revenge, and all uncharitableness? And what are these but the very tempers of the devil? Again, do we not all by nature follow, and suffer ourselves to be led by our natural appetites, always looking downwards, never looking upwards to that God, in whom we live, move, and have our being? And

what is this but the very nature of the beasts that perish? Out of thy own heart, therefore, will I oblige thee to confess, what an inspired apostle has long since told us, that *the whole world* (by nature) *lies in the wicked one*; we are no better than those whom St. Jude calls *brute beasts*; for we have tempers in us all, by nature, that prove to a demonstration, that we are earthly, sensual, devilish.

And this, will serve as another argument, to prove the reality of the operations of the blessed Spirit on the hearts of believers, against those false professors, who deny there is any such thing as influences of the Holy Spirit, that may be felt. For if they will grant that the devil worketh, and so as to be felt in the hearts of the children of disobedience, (which they must grant, unless they will give an apostle the lie) where is the wonder that the good Spirit should have the same power over those who are truly obedient to the faith of Jesus Christ?

If it be true then, that we are all by nature, since the fall, a mixture of brute and devil, it is evident, that we all must receive the Holy Ghost, ere we can dwell with and enjoy God.

When you read, how the prodigal, in the gospel, was reduced to so low a condition, as to eat husks with swine, and how Nebuchadnezzar was turned out to graze with oxen; I am confident, you pity their unhappy state. And when you hear how Jesus Christ will say, at the last day, to all that are not born again of God, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*, do not your hearts shrink within you, with a secret horror? And if creatures, with only our degree of goodness, cannot bear even the thoughts of dwelling with beasts or devils, to whose nature we are so nearly allied, how do we imagine God, who is infinite goodness, and purity itself, can dwell with us, while we are partakers of both

their natures? We might as well think to reconcile heaven and hell.

When Adam had eaten the forbidden fruit, he fled and hid himself from God; why? because he was naked; he was alienated from the life of God, the due punishment of his disobedience. Now, we are all by nature naked and void of God, as he was at that time, and consequently, until we are changed, renewed, and clothed with a divine nature again, we must fly from God also.

Hence then appears the reasonableness of our being obliged to receive the Spirit of God. It is founded on the doctrine of original sin; and therefore, you will always find, that those who talk against feeling the operations of the Holy Ghost, very rarely, or slightly at least, mention our fall in Adam; no, they refer St. Paul's account of the depravity of unbelievers, only to those of old time. Whereas it is obvious, on the contrary, that we are all equally included under the guilt and consequences of our first parents sin, even as others; and to use the language of our own church-article, "bring into the world with us, a corruption, which renders us liable to God's wrath, and eternal damnation."

Should I preach to you any other doctrine, I should wrong my own soul; I should be found a false witness towards God and you; and he that preaches any other doctrine, howsoever dignified and distinguished, shall bear his punishment, who-soever he be.

From this plain reason then appears the necessity why we, as well as the first apostles, in this sense, must receive the Spirit of God.

For the great work of sanctification, or making us holy, is particularly referred to the Holy Ghost; therefore, our Lord says, *Unless a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

Jesus Christ came down to save us, not only

from the guilt, but also from the power of sin: And however often we have repeated our creed, and told God we believe in the Holy Ghost, yet, if we have not believed in him, so as to be really united to Jesus Christ by him, we have no more concord with Jesus Christ than Belial himself.

And now, my brethren, what shall I say more? Tell me, are not many of you offended at what has been said already? Do not some of you think, tho' I mean well, yet I have carried the point a little too far? Are not others ready to cry out, if this be true, *who then can be saved?* Is not this driving people into despair?

Yes, I ingenuously confess it is; but into what despair? a despair of mercy through Christ? No, God forbid; but a despair of living with God without receiving the Holy Ghost. And I would to God, that not only all you that hear me this day, but that the whole world was filled with this despair. Believe me, I have been doing no more than you allow your bodily physicians to do every day: If you have a wound, and are in earnest about a cure, you bid the surgeon probe it to the very bottom; and shall not the physician of your souls be allowed the same freedom? What have I been doing but searching your natural wounds, that I might convince you of your danger, and put you upon applying to Jesus Christ for a remedy? Indeed I have dealt with you as gently as I could; and now I have wounded, I will attempt to heal you. For I was, in the

Last place, to exhort you all to come to Jesus Christ by faith, whereby you, even you also, shall receive the Holy Ghost. For this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.

This, this is what I long to come to. Hitherto I have been preaching only the law; but *behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy.* If I have wounded you, be not afraid; behold I now bring a reme-

dy for all your wounds. Notwithstanding you are sunk into the nature of the beast and devil, yet, if you truly believe on Jesus Christ, you shall receive the quickening Spirit promised in the text, and be restored to the glorious liberties of the sons of God; I say, if you believe on Jesus Christ. *For by faith we are saved; it is not of works, least any one should boast.* And, however some men may say, there is a fitness required in the creature, and that we must have a righteousness of our own, before we can lay hold on the righteousness of Christ; yet, if we believe the scripture, salvation is the free gift of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord; and whosoever believeth on him with his whole heart, tho' his soul be as black as hell itself, shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Behold then, I stand up, and cry out in this great day of the feast, *Let every one that thirsteth come unto Jesus Christ and drink. He that believeth on him, out of his belly shall flow* (not only streams or rivulets, but whole) *rivers of living water.* This I speak of the Spirit, which they that believe on Jesus shall certainly receive. For Jesus Christ is *the same yesterday, to-day and for ever.* He is the way, the truth, the resurrection, and the life; *whosoever believeth on him, though he were dead, yet shall he live.* There is no respect of persons with Jesus Christ; high and low, rich and poor, one with another, may come to him with an humble confidence, if they draw near by faith; from him we may all receive grace upon grace; for Jesus Christ is full of grace and truth, and ready to save to the uttermost, all that by a true faith turn unto him. Indeed, the poor generally receive the gospel, and God has *chosen the poor in this world, rich in faith.* But though not many mighty, not many noble are called; and though it be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God, yet, even to you that are rich, do I now freely offer salvation, by Jesus

Christ, if you will renounce yourselves, and come to Jesus Christ as poor sinners; I say, as poor sinners; for *the poor in spirit* are only so blessed as to have a right to the kingdom of God. And Jesus Christ calls none to him, but those who thirst after his righteousness, and feel themselves weary, and heavy laden with the burden of their sins. Jesus Christ justifies the ungodly; he *came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

Do not then say you are unworthy: for this is a faithful and true saying, and worthy of all men to be received, *That Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners;* and if you are the chief of sinners, if you feel yourselves such, verily Jesus Christ came into the world chiefly to save you. When Joseph was called out of the prison-house to Pharaoh's court, we are told, that he staid some time to prepare himself; but do you come with all your prison clothes about you; come poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked, as you are, and God the Father shall receive you with open arms, as was the returning prodigal. He shall cover your nakedness with the best robe of his dear Son's righteousness, shall seal you with the signet of his Spirit, and feed you with the fatted calf, even with the comforts of the Holy Ghost. O, let there then be joy in heaven over some of you, as believing; let me not go back to my Master, and say, Lord, they will not believe my report. Harden no longer your hearts, but open them wide, and let the King of glory enter in; believe me, I am willing to go to prison or death for you; but I am not willing to go to heaven without you. The love of Jesus Christ constrains me to lift up my voice like a trumpet. My heart is now full; out of the abundance of the love which I have for your precious and immortal souls, my mouth now speaketh; and I could now not only continue my discourse until midnight, but I could speak until I could speak no more. And why should

I despair of any? No, I can despair of no one, when I consider Jesus Christ has had mercy on such a wretch as I am; however you may think of yourselves, I know that by nature I am but half a devil and half a beast. The free grace of Christ prevented me; he saw me in my blood, he passed by me, and said unto me, live; and the same grace which was sufficient for me, is sufficient for you also; behold, the same blessed Spirit is ready to breathe on all your dry bones, if you will believe on Jesus Christ, whom God has sent; indeed, you can never believe on, or serve a better master, one that is more mighty, or more willing to save; I can say, the Lord Christ is gracious, his yoke is easy, his burden exceeding light; after you have served him many years, like the servants under the law, was he willing to discharge you, you would say, we love our Master, and will not go from him. Come then, my guilty brethren, come and believe on the Lord that bought you with his precious blood; look up by faith, and see him whom you have pierced; behold him bleeding, panting, dying! Behold him with arms stretched out ready to receive you all; cry unto him as the penitent thief did, Lord, remember us now thou art in thy kingdom, and he shall say to your souls, *Shortly shall you be with me in paradise.* For those whom Christ justifies, them he also glorifies, even with that glory which he enjoyed with the Father before the world began. Do not say, *I have bought a piece of ground, and must needs go see it; or I have bought a yoke of oxen, and must needs go prove them; or I have married a wife, I am engaged in an eager pursuit after the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, and therefore cannot come.* Do not fear having your name cast out as evil, or being accounted a fool for Christ's sake; yet a little while, and you shall shine like the stars in the firmament for ever. Only believe, and Jesus Christ shall be to you *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and eternal redemption*: your

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bodies shall be fashioned like unto his glorious body, and your souls be partakers of all the fulness of God.

Which God, of his infinite mercy, grant through Jesus Christ; to whom, with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, three persons, and one God, be ascribed, as is most due, all power, might, majesty, and dominion, now and evermore. Amen, Amen.

S E R M O N XII.

The Eternity of Hell-Torments.

MATTHEW XXV. 46.

These shall go away into everlasting Punishment.

THE excellency of the gospel-dispensation is greatly evidenced by those sanctions of rewards and punishments which it offers to the choice of all its hearers, in order to engage them to be obedient to its precepts. For it promises no less than eternal happiness to the good, and denounces no slighter a punishment than everlasting misery against the wicked: On the one hand, "It is a favour of life unto life;" on the other, "A favour of death unto death." And though one would imagine the bare mentioning of the former would be sufficient to draw men to their duty, yet ministers in all ages, have found it necessary, frequently to re-mind their people of the latter, and to set before them the terrors of the Lord, as so many powerful dissuatives from sin.

But whence is it that men are so disingenuous? The reason seems to be this: The promise of eternal happiness is so agreeable to the inclinations and

wishes of mankind, that all who call themselves Christians, universally and willingly subscribe to the belief of it: But then there is something so shocking in the consideration of eternal torments, and seemingly such an infinite disproportion between an endless duration of pain, and a short life spent in pleasure, that men (some at least of them) can scarcely be brought to confess it as an article of their faith, that an eternity of misery awaits the wicked in a future state.

I shall therefore at this time, beg leave to insist on the proof of this part of one of the articles of our creed; and endeavour to make good what our blessed Lord has here threatened in the words of the text, *These* (that is the wicked) *shall go away into everlasting punishment.*

Accordingly, without considering the words as they stand in relation to the context, I shall resolve all I have to say, into this one general proposition, "That the torments reserved for the wicked hereafter, are eternal."

But before I proceed to make good this, I must inform you that I take it for granted,

All present do stedfastly believe, They have something within them, which we call a soul, and which is capable of surviving the dissolution of the body, and of being miserable or happy to all eternity.

I take it for granted farther, That you believe a divine revelation; that those books emphatically called the Scriptures, were written by the inspiration of God, and that the things therein contained, are founded upon eternal truth.

I take it for granted, That you believe, that the Son of God came down to die for sinners; and that there is but one Mediator between God and man, even the Man Christ Jesus.

These things being granted, (and they were necessary to be premised) proceed we now to make good the one general proposition asserted in the

text, That the torments reserved for the wicked hereafter are eternal. *These shall go away into everlasting punishment.* The

First argument I shall advance to prove that the torments reserved for the wicked hereafter are eternal, (for I have taken it for granted, that you believe those books, emphatically called the Scriptures, were written by the inspiration of God, and that the things contained therein are founded upon eternal truth) is, that the word of God himself assures us, in line upon line, that it will be so.

To quote all the texts that might be produced in proof of this, would be endless. Let it suffice to instance only in a few. In the Old Testament, in the book of Daniel, chap. xii. ver. 2. we are told, that *some shall awake to everlasting life, and others to everlasting contempt.* In the book of Isaiah, it is said, that *the worm of those who have transgressed God's law, and die impenitently, shall not die, nor their fire be quenched.* And, in another place, the holy prophet, struck, no doubt, with astonishment and horror at the prospect of the continuance of the torments of the damned, breaks out into this moving expostulation, *Who can dwell with everlasting burnings?*

The New Testament is still fuller as to this point, it being a revelation which brought this and such like particulars to a clear light. The apostle Jude tells us of the profane despisers of dignities in his days, that *for them was reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.* And in the book of the Revelations, it is written, that *the smoke of the torments of the wicked ascendeth for ever and ever.* And if we believe the witness of men inspired, the witness of the Son of God, who had the Spirit given him, as Mediator, without measure, is still far greater: And in St. Mark's gospel he repeats this solemn declaration three several times, *It is better for thee to enter into life maimed;* that is, it is better to forego the gratificati-

on of thy lust, or incur the displeasure of a friend, which may be as dear to thee as a hand, or as useful as a foot, *than having two hands and feet*, (that is, for indulging the one, or disobeying God to oblige the other) *to be cast into hell, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*

And here again, in the words of the text, *These* (the wicked) *shall go away into everlasting punishment.*

I know it has been objected by some who have denied the eternity of hell torments, That the words, *everlasting* and *ever and ever*, are often used in the Holy Scriptures, (especially in the Old Testament) when they signify not an endless duration, but a limited term of time.

And this we readily grant: But then we reply, That when the words are used with this limitation, they either manifestly appear to be used so from the context; or are put in opposition to occasional types, which God gave his people on some special occasions, as when it is said, *It shall be a perpetual or everlasting statute*, or, *a statute for ever*; that is, a standing type, and not merely transient or occasional, as was the pillar of cloud, the manna, and such like. Or, lastly, they have a relation to that covenant God made with his spiritual Israel; which if understood in a spiritual sense, will be everlasting, though the ceremonial dispensation be abolished.

Besides, it ought to be observed, that some of the passages just now referred to, have neither of these words so much as mentioned in them, and cannot possibly be interpreted, so as to denote only a limited term of years.

But let that be as it will, it is evident even to a demonstration, that the words of the text will not admit of such a restrained signification, as appears from their being directly opposed to the words immediately following, *That the righteous shall go into life eternal.* From which words, all are ready to grant, that the life promised to the righteous will

be eternal. And why the punishment threatened to the wicked should not be understood to be eternal likewise, when the very same word in the original, is used to express the duration of each, no shadow of a reason can be given.

But, *secondly*, There cannot be one argument urged, why God should reward his saints with everlasting happiness, which will not equally prove that he ought to punish sinners with eternal misery.

For, since we know nothing (at least for a certainty) how he will deal with either, but by a divine revelation; and since, as was proved by the foregoing argument, he hath as positively threatened eternally to punish the wicked, as to reward the good; it follows, that his truth will be as much impeached and called in question, did he not inflict his punishments, as it would be, if he did not confer his rewards.

To this also it has been objected, That though God is obliged by promise to give his rewards, yet his veracity could not be called in question, supposing he should not execute his threatenings, as he actually did not in the case of Nineveh; which God expressly declared by his prophet Jonah, *should be destroyed in forty days*: Notwithstanding the sequel of the story informs us, that Nineveh was spared.

But in answer to this objection, we affirm, That God's threatenings, as well as promises, are without repentance; and for this reason, because they are both founded on the eternal laws of right reason. Accordingly we always find, that where the conditions were not performed, on the non-performance of which the threatenings were denounced, God always executed the punishment threatened. The driving Adam out of Eden, the destruction of the old world by a deluge of water, and the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, are, and will be always so many standing monuments of God's executing his threatenings when denounced, though to our

weak apprehensions, the punishment may seem far to exceed the crime.

It is true, God did spare Nineveh, and that because the inhabitants did actually repent, and therefore performed the conditions upon which it was supposed, by the prophet's being sent to warn them, the threatened punishment should be withheld.

And so in respect to gospel-threatenings. If men will so far consult their own welfare, as to comply with the gospel, God certainly will not punish them, but on the contrary, confer upon them his rewards. But to affirm that he will not punish, and that eternally too, impenitent, obstinate sinners, according as he hath threatened; what is it, in effect, but to make God like a man, that he should lie, or the son of man, that he should repent?

But the absurdity of such an opinion will appear still more evident from

The *third* argument I shall offer to prove, that the torments reserved for the wicked hereafter are eternal, from the nature of the Christian covenant.

And here I must again observe, that it was taken for granted at the beginning of this discourse, that you believe the Son of God came down to save sinners; and that there is but one Mediator between God and man, even the man Christ Jesus.

And here I take it for granted farther, (unless you believe the absurd and unwarrantable doctrine of purgatory) that you are fully persuaded, this life is the only time allotted by Almighty God for working out our salvation, and that after a few years are passed over, there will remain no more sacrifice for sin.

And if this be granted (and who dares deny it?) it follows, that if a wicked man dieth in his wickedness, and under the wrath of God, he must continue in that state to all eternity. For, since there is no possibility of his being delivered out of such a condition, but by and through Christ; and since,

at the hour of death, the time of Christ's mediation and intercession for him is irrecoverably gone; the same reason that may be given, why God should punish a sinner that dieth under the guilt of his sins for a single day, will equally hold good, why he should continue to punish him for a year, an age, nay to all eternity.

But I hasten to the *fourth* and last argument, to prove, That the torments reserved for the wicked hereafter are eternal, because the devil's punishment is to be so.

That there is such a being whom we call the devil; that he was once an angel of light, but for his pride and rebellion against God, was cast down from heaven, and is now permitted, with the rest of the spiritual wickednesses, to walk to and fro, seeking whom they may devour; that there is a place of torment reserved for them, or, to use the apostle's words, *That they are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day*; are truths all here present were supposed to be convinced of, at the beginning of this discourse, you believing the Holy Scriptures to be written by the inspiration of God, wherein these truths are delivered.

But then if we allow all this, and think it no injustice in God to punish those once glorious spirits for their rebellion; how can we think it unjust in him to punish wicked men for their impenitency to all eternity?

You will say, perhaps, that they have sinned against greater light, and therefore deserve a greater punishment. And so we grant that the punishment of the fallen angels may be greater as to degree, than that of wicked men; but then we affirm, it will be equal as to the eternal duration of it. For in that day, as the lively oracles of God inform us, shall the Son of man say to them on his left hand, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into ever-*

lasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. Where we find that impenitent sinners are to be cast into the same everlasting fire with the devil and his angels; and that too very justly. For though they may have sinned against greater light, yet Christians sin against greater mercy. Since Christ took not hold of, did not die for, the fallen angels, but for men and for our salvation. So that if God spared not those excellent beings, assure thyself, O obstinate sinner, whoever thou art, he will by no means spare thee.

From what then has been said it plainly appears, that verily the torments reserved for the wicked hereafter, are eternal. And if so, brethren, how ought we to fly to Jesus Christ for refuge; how holy ought we to be in all manner of conversation and godliness, that we may be accounted worthy to escape this wrath to come!

But before I proceed to a practical exhortation, permit me to draw an inference or two from what has been said.

And *first*, If the torments reserved for the wicked hereafter are eternal, what shall we say to those, who make an open profession in their creed to believe a life everlasting, a life of misery as well as happiness, and yet dare to live in the actual commission of those sins which will unavoidably, without repentance, bring them into that place of torment? Thou believest that the punishments of the impenitently wicked in another life, are eternal: Thou doest well, the devils also believe and tremble. But know, O vain man, unless this belief doth influence thy practice, and makes thee bid adieu to thy sins, every time thou repeatest thy creed, thou doest in effect say, I believe I shall be undone for ever.

But, *secondly*, If the torments reserved for the wicked hereafter are eternal, then let this serve as a caution to such persons, (and it is to be feared there are some such) who go about to dissuade o-

thers from the belief of such an important truth: There being no surer way, in all probability, to encourage and promote infidelity and prophaneness, than the broaching or maintaining so unwarrantable a doctrine. For if the positive threats of God concerning the eternity of hell-torments, are already found insufficient to deter men from sin, what a higher pitch of wickedness may we imagine they will quickly arrive at, when they are taught to entertain any hopes of a future recovery out of them; or, what is still worse, that their souls are hereafter to be annihilated, and become like the beasts that perish? But wo unto such blind leaders of the blind. No wonder if they both fall into the ditch. And let such corrupters of God's word know, that I testify unto every man that heareth me this day, *That if any one shall add unto, or take away from the words that are written in the book of God, God shall take his part out of the book of life, and shall add unto him all the plagues that are in that book.*

Thirdly and lastly, If the torments reserved for the wicked hereafter are eternal, then this may serve as a reproof for those who quarrel with God, and say it is inconsistent with his justice, to punish a person to all eternity, only for enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season. But such persons must be told, that it is not their thinking or calling God unjust, will make him so, no more than a condemned prisoner's saying the law or judge is unjust, will render either duly chargeable with such an imputation. But knowest thou, O worm, what blasphemy thou art guilty of, in charging God with injustice? *Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?* Wilt thou presume to arraign the Almighty at the bar of thy shallow reasoning? And call him unjust, for punishing thee eternally, only because thou wishest it may not be so? But hath God said it, and shall he not do it? He hath said it: And let God be true

though every man be a liar. *Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?* Assuredly he will. And if sinners will not own his justice in his threatenings here, they will be compelled ere long to own and feel them, when tormented by him hereafter.

But to come to a more practical application of what has been delivered.

You have heard, brethren, the eternity of hell-torments plainly proved, from the express declarations of Holy Scriptures, and consequences naturally drawn from them. And now there seems to need no great art of rhetoric to persuade any understanding person to avoid and abhor those sins, which, without repentance will certainly plunge him into this eternal gulph. The disproportion between the pleasure and the pain (if there be any pleasure in sin) is so infinitely great that supposing it was only possible, though not certain, that the wicked would be everlastingly punished, no one that has the reason of a man, for the enjoying a little momentary pleasure, would, one might imagine, run the hazard of enduring eternal pain. But since the torments of the damned are not only possible, but certain, (since God himself, who cannot lie, has told us so) for men, notwithstanding, to persist in their disobedience, and then flatter themselves, that God will not make good his threatenings, is a most egregious instance of folly and presumption.

Dives himself supposed, that if one rose from the dead, his brethren would amend their lives; but Christians, it seems, will not repent, though the Son of God died and rose again, and told them what they must expect, if they continue obstinate in evil-doing.

Would we now and then draw off our thoughts from sensible objects, and by faith meditate a while on the miseries of the damned, I doubt not but we should, as it were, hear many an unhappy soul vent-

ing his fruitless sorrows, in some such piteous moans as these,

O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death! O foolish mortal that I was; thus to bring myself into these never-ceasing tortures, for the transitory enjoyments of a few short-lived pleasures, which scarcely afforded me any satisfaction, even when I most indulged myself in them. Alas! are these the wages, these the effects of sin? Are all the grand deceiver's inviting promises come to this? O damned apostate! first to delude me with pretended promises of happiness, and after several years drudgery in his service, thus to involve me in eternal woe. O that I had never hearkened to his beguiling insinuations! O that I had rejected his very first suggestions with the utmost detestation and abhorrence! O that I had taken up my cross and followed Christ! O that I had never ridiculed serious godliness; and out of a false politeness, condemned the truly pious as too severe, enthusiastic, or superstitious! For I then had been happy indeed, happy beyond expression, happy to all eternity, yonder in those blessed regions where they sit, cloathed with unspeakable glory, and chanting forth their seraphic hallelujahs to the Lamb that sitteth upon the throne for ever. But, alas! these reflections come too late: These wishes now are vain and fruitless. I have not suffered, and therefore must not reign with them. I have in effect denied the Lord that bought me, and therefore justly am I now denied by him. But must I live for ever tormented in these flames? Must this body of mine, which not long since lay in state, was cloathed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day, must it be here eternally confined, and made the mockery of insulting devils? O eternity! that thought fills me with despair: I must be miserable for ever.

Come then, all ye self-deluding, self-deluded sin-

ners, and imagine yourselves for once in the place of that truly wretched man I have been here describing. Think, I beseech you by the mercies of God in Christ Jesus, think with yourselves, how raking, how unsupportable the never-dying worm of a self-condemning conscience will hereafter be to you. Think how impossible it will be for you to dwell with everlasting burnings.

Come, all ye Christians of a lukewarm, Laodicean spirit, ye Gallios in religion, who care a little, but not enough for the things of God; O think, think with yourselves, how deplorable it will be to lose the enjoyment of heaven, and run into endless torments, merely because you will be content to be almost, and will not strive to be altogether Christians. Consider, I beseech you consider, how you will rave and curse that fatal stupidity which made you believe any thing less than true faith in Jesus, productive of a life of strict piety, self-denial, and mortification, can keep you from those torments, the eternity of which I have been endeavouring to prove.

But I can no more. These thoughts are too melancholly for me to dwell on, as well as for you to hear; and God knows, as punishing is his strange work, so denouncing his threatenings is mine; but if the bare mentioning the torments of the damned is so shocking, how terrible must the enduring of them be!

And now, are not some of you ready to cry out, *These are hard sayings, who can bear them?*

But let not sincere Christians be in the least terrified at what has been delivered: No, for you is reserved a crown, a kingdom, an eternal and exceeding weight of glory. Christ never said that the righteous, the believing, the upright, the sincere, but the wicked, merciless, negatively good professors before described, shall go into everlasting punishment. For you, who love him in sincerity, a new and living

way is laid open into the holy of holies by the blood of Jesus Christ: And an abundant entrance will be administered unto you, at the great day of account into eternal life. Take heed, therefore, and beware that there be not in any of you a root of bitterness springing up of unbelief: But on the contrary, stedfastly and heartily rely on the many precious promises reached out to you in the gospel, knowing that he who hath promised is faithful, and therefore will perform.

But let no obstinately wicked professors dare to apply any of the divine promises to themselves: *For it is not meet to take the childrens bread, and give it unto dogs!* No, to such the terrors of the Lord only belong. And as certainly as Christ will say to his true followers, *Come, ye blessed children of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world;* so he will unalterably pronounce this dreadful sentence against all that die in their sins, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*

From which unhappy state, may God of his infinite mercy deliver us all through Jesus Christ; to whom, with thee O Father, and thee O Holy Ghost, three persons and one eternal God, be ascribed, as is most due, all honour, power, might, majesty, and dominion, now and for evermore.

S E R M O N XIII.

The great Duty of FAMILY-RELIGION.

JOSHUA xxiv. 15.

As for me and my House, we will serve the Lord.

THESE words contain the holy resolution of pious Joshua, who having in a most mo-

ving, affectionate discourse recounted to the Israelites what great things God had done for them, in the verse immediately preceding the text, comes to draw a proper inference from what he had been delivering; and acquaints them, in the most pressing terms, that since God had been so exceeding gracious unto them, they could do no less, than out of gratitude for such uncommon favours and mercies, dedicate both themselves and families to his service. *Now therefore, fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood.* And by the same engaging motive does the prophet Samuel afterwards enforce their obedience to the commandments of God, 1 Sam. xii. 24. *Only fear the Lord and serve him in truth, with all your heart; for consider how great things he hath done for you.* But then, that they might not excuse themselves (as too many might be apt to do) by his giving them a bad example, or think he was laying heavy burdens upon them, whilst he himself touched them not with one of his fingers, he tells them in the text, that whatever regard they might pay to the doctrine he had been preaching, yet he (as all ministers ought to do) was resolved to live up to and practise it himself: *Chuse you, therefore, whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*

A resolution this, worthy of Joshua, and no less becoming, no less necessary for every true son of Joshua, that is intrusted with the care and government of a family in our day: And; if it was ever seasonable for ministers to preach up, or people to put in practice *family-religion*; it was never more so than in the present age; since it is greatly to be feared, that out of those many households that call themselves Christians, there are but few that serve God in their respective families as they ought.

It is true indeed, visit our churches, and you may perhaps see something of the *form of godliness*: still subsisting among us; but even that is scarcely to be met with in private houses. So that were the blessed angels to come, as in the patriarchal age, and observe our spiritual oeconomy at home, would they not be tempted to say as Abraham to Abimelech, *Surely, the fear of God is not in this place?* Gen. xx. 11.

How such a general neglect of *family-religion* first began to overspread the Christian world, is difficult to determine. As for the primitive Christians, I am positive it was not so with them: No, they had not so learned Christ, as falsely to imagine religion was to be confined solely to their assemblies for public worship; but, on the contrary, behaved with such piety and exemplary holiness in their private families, that St. Paul often styles their house a church: *Salute such a one*, says he, *and the church which is in his house*. And, I believe, we must for ever despair of seeing a primitive spirit of piety revived in the world, till we are so happy as to see a revival of primitive *family-religion*; and persons unanimously resolving with good old Joshua, in the words of the text, *As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord*.

From which words, I shall beg leave to insist on these three things.

I. *First*, That it is the duty of every governor of a family to take care, that not only he himself, but also that those committed to his charge, *serve the Lord*.

II. *Secondly*, I shall endeavour to shew after what manner a governor and his household ought to serve the Lord. And,

III. *Thirdly*, I shall offer some motives, in order to excite all governors, with their respective households, to serve the Lord in the manner that shall be recommended.

And *First*, I am to shew that it is the duty of every governor of a family to take care, that not only he himself, but also that those committed to his charge, should *serve the Lord*.

And this will appear, if we consider that every governor of a family ought to look upon himself as obliged to act in three capacities: as a prophet, to instruct; as a priest, to pray for and with; as a king, to govern, direct, and provide for them. It is true indeed, the latter of these, their kingly office, they are not so frequently deficient in, (nay in this they are generally too solicitous;) but as for the two former, their priestly and prophetic office, like Galio, they care for no such things. But however indifferent some governors may be about it, they may be assured, that God will require a due discharge of these offices at their hands. For if, as the apostle argues, *He that does not provide for his own house, in temporal things, has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel*; to what greater degree of apostacy must he have arrived, who takes no thought to provide for the spiritual welfare of his family!

But farther, persons are generally very liberal of their invectives against the clergy, and think they justly blame the conduct of that minister who does not take heed to and watch over the flock, of which the Holy Ghost has made him overseer: But may not every governor of a family, be in a lower degree liable to the same censure, who takes no thought for those souls that are committed to his charge? For every house is as it were a little parish, every governor (as was before observed) a priest, every family a flock: And if any of them perish through the governor's neglect, their blood will God require at their hands.

Was a minister to disregard teaching his people publicly, and from house to house, and to excuse himself by saying, that he had enough to do to work

out his own salvation with fear and trembling, without concerning himself with that of others; would you not be apt to think such a minister, to be like the unjust judge, *One that neither feared God, nor regarded man?* And yet, odious as such a character would be, it is no worse than that governor of a family deserves, who thinks himself obliged only to save his own soul, without paying any regard to the souls of his household. For (as was above hinted) every house is as it were a parish, and every master is concerned to secure, as much as in him lies, the spiritual prosperity of every one under his roof, as any minister whatever is obliged to look to the spiritual welfare of every individual person under his charge.

What precedents men who neglect their duty in this particular, can plead for such omission, I cannot tell. Doubtless not the example of holy Job, who was so far from imagining that he had no concern, as governor of a family, with any one's soul but his own, that the scripture acquaints us, *When the days of his childrens feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and offered burnt-offerings, according to the number of them all; for Job said, it may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God, in their hearts: Thus did Job continually.* Nor can they plead the practice of good old Joshua, whom, in the text, we find as much concerned for his household's welfare, as his own. Nor lastly, that of Cornelius, who *feared God*, not only himself, but with *all his house*: And were Christians but of the same spirit of Job, Joshua, and the Gentile centurion, they would act as Job, Joshua, and Cornelius did.

But alas! if this be the case, and all governors of families ought not only to serve the Lord themselves, but likewise to see that their respective households do so too; what will then become of those who not only neglect serving God themselves, but also make it their business to ridicule and scoff at

any of their house that do? Who are not content with *not entering into the kingdom of heaven themselves; but those also that are willing to enter in, they hinder.* Surely such men are factors for the devil indeed. Surely their damnation slumbereth not: For although God, in his good providence, may suffer such stumbling-blocks to be put in his childrens way, and suffer their greatest enemies to be those of their own households, for a trial of their sincerity, and improvement of their faith; yet we cannot but pronounce a *woe* against those masters *by whom such offences come.* For if those that only take care of their own souls, can scarcely be saved, where will such monstrous profane and wicked governors appear?

But hoping there are but few of this unhappy stamp, proceed we now to the

Second thing proposed; To shew after what manner a governor and his household ought to serve the Lord.

1. And the first thing I shall mention, is, reading the word of God. This is a duty incumbent on every private person. *Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life,* is a precept given by our blessed Lord indifferently to all: But much more so, ought every governor of a family to think it in a peculiar manner spoken to himself, because (as hath been already proved) he ought to look upon himself as a prophet, and therefore, agreeably to such a character, bound to instruct those under his charge in the knowledge of the word of God.

This we find was the order God gave to his peculiar people Israel: For thus speaks his representative Moses, Deut. vi. 6, 7. *These words, that is, the scripture words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, that is, as it is generally explained, servants, as well as children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house.*

From whence we may infer, that the only reason, why so many neglect to read the words of Scripture diligently to their children is, because the words of Scripture are not in their hearts: For if they were, out of the abundance of the heart their mouth would speak.

Besides, servants as well as children, are, for the generality, very ignorant, and mere novices in the laws of God: And how shall they know, unless some one teach them? And what more proper to teach them by, than the lively oracles of God, *which are able to make them wise unto salvation?* And who more proper to instruct them by these lively oracles, than parents and masters, who (as hath been more than once observed) are as much concerned to feed them with spiritual, as with bodily bread, day by day.

But if these things be so, what a miserable condition are those unhappy governors in, who are so far from feeding those committed to their care with the sincere milk of the word, to the intent they may grow thereby, that they neither search the Scriptures themselves, nor are careful to explain them to others? Such families must be in a happy way indeed to do their master's will, who take such prodigious pains to know it! Would not one imagine that they had turned converts to the church of Rome; that they thought ignorance to be the mother of devotion; and that those were to be condemned as heretics who read their Bibles? And yet how few families are there amongst us, who do not act after this unseemly manner! *But shall I praise them in this? I praise them not: Brethren, this thing ought not so to be.*

2. Pass we on now to the second means whereby every governor and his household ought to serve the Lord, *Family-prayer.*

This is a duty, though as much neglected, yet as absolutely necessary as the former. Reading is

a good preparative for prayer, as prayer is an excellent means to render reading effectual. And the reason why every governor of a family should join both those exercises together, is plain, because a governor of a family cannot perform his priestly office (which we before observed he is in some degree invested with) without performing this duty of family-prayer.

We find it therefore remarked, when mention is made of Cain and Abel's offering sacrifices, that they brought them. But to whom did they bring them? Why, in all probability, to their father Adam, who, as priest of the family, was to offer sacrifice in their names. And so likewise ought every spiritual son of the second Adam, who is intrusted with the care of an household, to offer up the spiritual sacrifices of supplications and thanksgivings, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, in the presence and name of all who wait upon, or eat meat at his table.

Thus we read our blessed Lord behaved, when he tabernacled amongst us: For it is said often, that he prayed with his twelve disciples, which was then his little family. And he himself has promised a particular blessing to joint supplications: *Wheresoever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* And again, *If two or three are agreed touching any thing they shall ask, it shall be given them.* Add to this, that we are commanded by the apostle to *pray always, with all manner of supplication,* which doubtless includes family-prayer. And holy Joshua, when he set up the good resolution in the text, that he and his household would *serve the Lord*, certainly resolved to pray with his family, which is one of the best testimonies they could give of their serving him.

Besides, there are no families but what have some common blessings, of which they have been all par-

takers, to give thanks for; some common crosses and afflictions, which they are to pray against; some common sins, which they are all to lament and bewail: But how this can be done, without joining together in one common act of humiliation, supplication, and thanksgiving, is difficult to devise.

From all which considerations put together, it is evident, that family-prayer is a great and necessary duty; and consequently, those governors that neglect it, are certainly without excuse. And it is much to be feared, if they live without family-prayer, they live without God in the world.

And yet, such an hateful character as this is, it is to be feared, that was God to send out an angel to destroy us, as he did once to destroy the Egyptian first-born, and withal give him a commission, as then, to spare no houses but where they saw the blood on the lintel, sprinkled on the door-post, so now, to let no families escape, but those that called upon him in morning and evening prayer; few would remain unhurt by his avenging sword. Shall I term such families Christians or heathens? Doubtless they deserve not the name of Christians; and heathens will surely rise up in judgment against such profane families of this generation: For they had always their household gods, whom they worshipped, and whose assistance they frequently invoked. And a pretty pass those families surely are arrived at, who must be sent to school to Pagans. But will not the Lord be avenged on such profane households as these? will he not pour out his fury upon those that call not upon his name?

3. But it is time for me to hasten to the third and last means I shall recommend, whereby every governor ought with his household to *serve the Lord*, catechising and instructing their children and servants, and bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

That this, as well as the two former, is a duty incumbent on every governor of an house, appears from that famous encomium or commendation God gives of Abraham: *I know that he will command his children and his household after him, to keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment.* And indeed scarce any thing is more frequently pressed upon us in holy writ, than this duty of catechising. Thus, says God in a passage before-cited, *Thou shalt teach these words diligently unto thy children.* And parents are commanded in the New Testament, *to breed up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* The holy Psalmist acquaints us, that one great end why God did such great wonders for his people, was, *to the intent that when they grew up, they should shew their children, or servants, the same.* And in Deuteronomy vi. at the 20th and following verses, God strictly commands his people to instruct their children in the true nature of the ceremonial worship, when they should enquire about it, as he supposed they would do, in time to come. And if servants and children were to be instructed in the nature of Jewish rites, much more ought they now to be initiated and grounded in the doctrines and first principles of the gospel of Christ: Not only, because it is a revelation, which has brought life and immortality to a fuller and clearer light, but also, because many seducers are gone abroad into the world, who do their utmost endeavour to destroy not only the superstructure, but likewise to sap the very foundation of our most holy religion.

Would then the present generation have their posterity be true lovers and honourers of God; masters and parents must take Solomon's good advice, and train up and catechise their respective households in the way wherein they should go.

I am aware but of one objection, that can, with any shew of reason, be urged against what has been

advanced; which is, that such a procedure as this will take up too much time, and hinder families too long from their worldly business. But it is much to be questioned, whether persons that start such an objection, are not of the same hypocritical spirit as the traitor Judas, who had indignation against devout Mary, for being so profuse of her ointment, in anointing our blessed Lord, and asked why it might not be sold for two hundred pence, and given to the poor. For has God given us so much time to work for ourselves, and shall we not allow some small pittance of it, morning and evening, to be devoted to his more immediate worship and service? Have not people read, that it is God who gives men power to get wealth, and therefore that the best way to prosper in the world, is to secure his favour? And has not our blessed Lord himself promised, that if we seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all outward necessities shall be added unto us?

Abraham, no doubt, was a man of as great business as such objectors may be; but yet he would find time to command his household to serve the Lord. Nay, David was a king, and consequently had a great deal of business upon his hands; yet notwithstanding, he professes that he would walk in his house with a perfect heart. And, to instance but one more, holy Joshua was a person certainly engaged very much in temporal affairs; and yet he solemnly declares before all Israel, that as for him and his household, they would *serve the Lord*. And did persons but redeem their time, as Abraham, David, or Joshua did, they would no longer complain, that family-duties kept them too long from the business of the world.

III. But my third and last general head, under which I was to offer some motives, in order to excite all governors, with their respective households, to *serve the Lord* in the manner before recommend-

ed, I hope, will serve instead of a thousand arguments, to prove the weakness and folly of any such objection.

1. And the first motive I shall mention is the duty of gratitude, which you that are governors of families owe to God.—Your lot, every one must confess, is cast in a fair ground; Providence hath given you a goodly heritage, above many of your fellow-creatures; and therefore, out of a principle of gratitude, you ought to endeavour, as much as in you lies, to make every person of your respective households to call upon him as long as they live: Not to mention, that the authority, with which God has invested you as parents and governors of families, is a talent committed to your trust, and which you are bound to improve to your Master's honour. In other things we find governors and parents can exercise lordship over their children and servants readily, and frequently enough can say to one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; to a third, Do this, and he doeth it. And shall this power be so often employed in your own affairs, and never exerted in the things of God? Be astonished, O heavens, at this!

Thus did not faithful Abraham; no, God says, that he knew Abraham would *command his servants and children after him*. Thus did not Joshua: No, he was resolved not only to walk with God himself, but to improve his authority in making all about him do so too: *As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord*. Let us go and do likewise.

2. But Secondly, If gratitude to God will not, methinks love and pity to your children should move you, with your respective families, to *serve the Lord*.

Most people express a great fondness for their children: Nay so great, that very often their own lives are wrapped up in those of their offspring.

Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? says God by his prophet Isaiah. He speaks of it as a monstrous thing, and scarce credible; but the words immediately following, affirm it to be possible, *Yea, they may forget*: and experience also assures us they may. Father and mother may both *forsake their children*: For what greater degree of forgetfulness can they express towards them, than to neglect the improvement of their better part, and not bring them up in the knowledge and fear of God?

It is true indeed, parents seldom forget to provide for their childrens bodies, (though, it is to be feared, some men are so far sunk beneath the beasts that perish, as to neglect even that) but then how often do they forget, or rather, when do they remember, to secure the salvation of their immortal souls? But is this their way of expressing their fondness for the fruit of their bodies? Is this the best testimony they can give of their affection to the darling of their hearts? Then was Dalilah fond of Samson, when she delivered him up into the hands of the Philistines: Then were those ruffians well-affected to Daniel, when they threw him into a den of lions.

3. But *Thirdly*, If neither gratitude to God, nor love and pity to your children, will prevail on you; yet let a principle of common honesty and justice move you to set up the holy resolution in the text.

This is a principle which all men would be thought to act upon. But certainly, if any may be truly censured for their injustice, none can be more liable to such censure, than those who think themselves injured if their servants withdraw themselves from their bodily work, and yet they in return take no care of their inestimable souls. For is it just that servants should spend their time and strength in their master's service, and masters not

at the same time give them what is just and equal for their service?

It is true, some men may think they have done enough when they give unto their servants food and raiment, and say, did not I bargain with thee for so much a-year? But if they give them no other reward than this, what do they less for their very beasts? But are not servants better than they? Doubtless they are: And however masters may put off their convictions for the present, they will find a time will come, when they shall know they ought to have given them some spiritual as well as temporal wages; and the cry of those that have mowed down their fields, will enter into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

4. But *Fourthly*, If neither gratitude to God, pity to children, nor a principle of common justice to servants, are sufficient to balance all objections; yet let that darling, that prevailing motive of self-interest turn the scale, and engage you with your respective households to *serve the Lord*.

This weighs greatly with you in other matters: Be then persuaded to let it have a due and full influence on you in this: And if it has, if you have but faith as a grain of mustard-seed, how can you avoid believing, that promoting family-religion would be the best means to promote your own temporal, as well as eternal welfare? For *godliness has the promise of the life that now is, as well as that which is to come*.

Besides, you all, doubtless, wish for honest servants, and pious children: And to have them prove otherwise, would be as great a grief to you, as it was to Elisha to have a treacherous Gehazi, or David to be troubled with a rebellious Absalom. But how can it be expected they should learn their duty, except those set over them, take care to teach it to them? Is it not as reasonable to expect you should

reap where you had not sown, or gather where you had not strawed?

Did Christianity, indeed, give any countenance to children and servants to disregard their parents and masters according to the flesh, or represent their duty to them, as inconsistent with their entire obedience to their Father and Master who is in heaven, there might then be some pretence to neglect instructing them in the principles of such a religion. But since the precepts of this pure and undefiled religion, are all of them holy, just, and good; and the more they are taught their duty to God, the better they will perform their duties to you; methinks, to neglect the improvement of their souls, out of a dread of spending too much time in religious duties, is acting quite contrary to your own interest as well as duty.

5. *Fifthly* and lastly, If neither gratitude to God, love to your children, common justice to your servants, nor even that most prevailing motive self-interest, will excite; yet let a consideration of the terrors of the Lord persuade you to put in practice the pious resolution in the text. Remember, the time will come, and that perhaps very shortly, when we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; where we must give a solemn and strict account how we have had our conversation, in our respective families, in this world. How will you endure to see your children and servants (who ought to be your joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ) coming out as so many swift witnesses against you; cursing the father that begot them, the womb that bare them, the paps which they have sucked, and the day they ever entered into your houses? Think you not, the damnation which men must endure for their own sins, will be sufficient, that they need load themselves with the additional guilt of being accessory to the damnation of others also? O consider this,

all ye that forget to serve the Lord with your respective households, *lest he pluck you away, and there be none to deliver you!*

But God forbid, brethren, that any such evil should befall you: No, rather will I hope, that you have been in some measure convinced, by what has been said, of the great importance of Family-religion; and therefore are ready to cry out, in the words immediately following the text, *God forbid that we should forsake the Lord;* and again, verse 21. *Nay, but we will* (with our several households) *serve the Lord.*

And that there may be always such a heart in you, let me exhort all governors of families, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, often to reflect on the inestimable worth of their own souls, and the infinite ransom, even the precious blood of Jesus Christ, which has been paid down for them. Remember, I beseech you to remember, that you are fallen creatures; that you are by nature lost and estranged from God; and that you can never be restored to your primitive happiness, till by being born again of the Holy Ghost, you arrive at your primitive state of purity, have the image of God restamped upon your souls, and are thereby made meet to be partakers of the inheritance with the saints in light. Do, I say, but seriously and frequently reflect on, and act as persons that believe such important truths, and you will no more neglect your families spiritual warfare than your own. No, the love of God, which will then be shed abroad in your hearts, will constrain you to do your utmost to preserve them: And the deep sense of God's free grace in Christ Jesus, (which you will then have) in calling you, will excite you to do your utmost to save others, especially those of your own household. And though, after all your pious endeavours, some may continue unreformed; yet you will have this comfortable reflection to

make, that you did what you could to make your families religious: And therefore may rest assured of sitting down in the kingdom of heaven, with Abraham, Joshua, and Cornelius, and all the godly householders, who in their several generations shone forth as so many lights in their respective households upon earth. *Amen.*

S E R M O N XIV.

The METHOD of GRACE.

JEREMIAH VI. 14. .

They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace.

AS God can send a nation or people no greater blessing, than to give them faithful, sincere, and upright ministers; so the greatest curse that God can possibly send upon a people in this world, is to give them over to blind, unregenerate, carnal, lukewarm, and unskilful guides. And yet, in all ages, we find, that there have been many wolves in sheeps cloathing, many that daubed with untempered mortar, that prophesied smother things, than God did allow. As it was formerly, so it is now, there are many that corrupt the word of God, and deal deceitfully with it. It was so in a special manner in the prophet Jeremiah's time; and he, faithful to his Lord, faithful to that God that employed him, did not fail, from time to time, to open his mouth against them, and to bear a noble testimony to the honour of that God, in whose name he from

time to time spake. If ye will read his prophecy, ye will find, that none spake more against such ministers than Jeremiah: and here especially, in the chapter out of which the text is taken, he speaks very severely against them; he charges them with several crimes, particularly, he charges them with covetousness: For, says he in the 13th verse, *from the least of them even to the greatest of them, every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest, every one dealeth falsely.* And then in the words of the text, in a more special manner, he exemplifies how they had dealt falsely, how they had behaved treacherously to poor souls, says he, *They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace.* The prophet, in the name of God, had been denouncing war against the people, he had been telling them, that their house should be left desolate, and the Lord would certainly visit the land with war, *Therefore*, says he, in the 11th verse, *I am full of the fury of the Lord: I am weary with holding in: I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of young men together: For even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the aged with him that is full of days. And their houses shall be turned unto others, with their fields and wives together: For I will stretch out my hand upon the inhabitants of the land, saith the Lord.* The prophet gives a thundering message, that they might be terrified, and have some convictions and inclinations to repent: But it seems that the false prophets, the false priests, went about stifling peoples convictions, and when they were hurt or a little terrified, they were for daubing over the wound, telling them, that Jeremiah was but an enthusiastic preacher; that there could be no such thing as a war among them; and bidding people *peace, peace, be still*, when the prophet told them there was no peace. The words then refer primarily unto outward things; but I verily believe

have also a further reference to the soul; and are to be referred to those false teachers, when people were under conviction of sin, when people were beginning to look towards heaven, they were for stifling their convictions, and telling them they were good enough before. And indeed people generally love to have it so: our hearts are exceedingly deceitful and desperately wicked; none but the eternal God knows how treacherous they are. How many of us cry, peace, peace to our souls, when there is no peace. How many are there that are now settled upon their lees, that now think they are Christians, that now flatter themselves that they have an interest in Jesus Christ; whereas, if we come to examine their experiences, we will find that their peace is but a peace of the devil's making, it is not a peace of God's giving; it is not a peace that passeth human understanding. It is matter therefore of great importance, my dear hearers, to know whether we may speak peace to our hearts: We are all desirous of peace, peace is an unspeakable blessing: How can we live without peace? And therefore people, from time to time, must be taught how far they must go, and what must be wrought in them, before they can speak peace to their hearts. This is what I design at present, that I may deliver my soul, that I may be free from the blood of all those to whom I preach, that I may not fail to declare the whole counsel of God: I shall, from the words of the text, endeavour to shew you what ye must undergo, and what must be wrought in you, before ye can speak peace to your hearts.

But before I come directly to this, give me leave to premise a caution or two. And the first is, That I take it for granted ye believe religion to be an inward thing; ye believe it to be a work in the heart, a work wrought in the soul by the power of the Spirit of God. If you do not believe this, ye do not

believe your Bible: If ye do not believe this, though ye have got your Bible in your hands, ye hate the Lord Jesus Christ in your heart: For religion is every where represented in scripture, as the work of God in the heart; *the kingdom of God is within us*, says our Lord; and, *he is not a Christian that is one outwardly, but he is a Christian who is one inwardly*. If any of you place religion in outward things, I shall not perhaps please you this morning; ye will understand me no more when I speak of the work of God upon a poor sinner's heart, than if I were talking in an unknown tongue. I would further premise a caution, that I would by no means confine God to one way of acting; I would by no means say, that all persons before they come to have a settled peace in their hearts, are obliged to undergo the same degrees of conviction. No; God has various ways of bringing his children home; his sacred Spirit bloweth when, and where, and how, it listeth. But however, I will venture to affirm this, that before ever ye can speak peace to your hearts, whether by shorter or longer continuance of your convictions, whether in a more pungent or in a more gentle way, ye must undergo what I shall hereafter lay down in the following discourse.

First, Then, before ye can speak peace to your hearts, ye must be made to see, made to feel, made to weep over, made to bewail your actual transgressions against the law of God. According to the covenant of works, the soul that sinneth it shall die; cursed is that man, be what he will, be who he will, that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them. We are not only to do some things, but we are to do all things, and we are to continue so to do; so that the least deviation from the moral law, according to the covenant of works, whether in thought, word or deed, deserves eternal death at

the hand of God. And if one evil thought, if one evil word, if one evil action, deserves eternal damnation; how many hells, my friends, do every one of us deserve, whose whole lives have been one continual rebellion against God. Before ever therefore ye can speak peace to your hearts, ye must be brought to see, brought to believe, what a dreadful thing it is to depart from the living God. And now, my dear friends, examine your hearts, for I hope ye come hither with a design to have your souls made better; give me leave to ask you, in the presence of God, whether ye know the time, and if ye do not know exactly the time, do ye know there was a time when God wrote bitter things against you, when the arrows of the Almighty were within you? Was ever the remembrance of your sins grievous to you? Was the burden of your sins intollerable to your thoughts? Did ye ever see that God's wrath might justly fall upon you, upon account of your actual transgressions against God? Were ye ever in all your life sorry for your sins? Could ye ever say, my sins are gone over my head as a burden too heavy for me to bear? Did ye ever experience any such thing as this? Did ever any such thing as this pass between God and your soul? If not, for Jesus Christ's sake do not call yourselves Christians; ye may speak peace to your hearts, but there is no peace. May the Lord awaken you, may the Lord convert you, may the Lord give you peace, if it be his will, before ye go home.

But further, ye may be convinced of your actual sins, so as to be made to tremble, and yet ye may be strangers to Jesus Christ, ye may have no true work of grace upon your heart. Before ever, therefore, ye can speak peace to your hearts, conviction must go deeper; ye must not only be convinced of your actual transgressions against the law of God, but likewise of the foundation of all

your transgressions; and what is that? I mean original sin; that original corruption each of us bring into the world with us, which renders us liable to God's wrath and damnation. There are many poor souls that think themselves fine reasoners, yet they pretend to say there is no such thing as original sin; they will charge God with injustice in imputing Adam's sin to us; although we have got the mark of the beast, and of the devil upon us, yet they tell us, we are not born in sin. Let them look abroad into the world, and see the disorders in it, and think if they can, if this is the paradise in which God did put man? No, every thing in the world is out of order. I have often thought, when I was abroad, that if there were no other argument to prove original sin, but the rising of wolves and tigers against man, nay, the barking of a dog against us, is a proof of original sin. Tigers and lions durst not rise against us, if it were not for Adam's first sin: For when the creatures rise up against us, it is as much as to say, ye have sinned against God, and we take up our Master's quarrel. If we look inward, we will see enough of lusts, and man's temper contrary to the temper of God; there is pride, malice, and revenge in all our hearts, and this temper cannot come from God; it comes from our first parent, Adam, who, after he fell from God, fell out of God into the devil. However, therefore, some people may deny this, yet when conviction comes, all carnal reasonings are battered down immediately, and the poor soul begins to feel and see the fountain from which all the polluted streams do flow. When the sinner is first awakened, he begins to wonder how he came to be so wicked: The Spirit of God then strikes in, and shows that he has no good thing in him by nature; then he sees that he is altogether gone out of the way, that he is altogether become abominable; and the poor creature is made to ly down at the foot of the

throne of God, and to acknowledge that God would be just to damn him, just to cut him off, though he never had committed one actual sin in his life. Did ye ever feel and experience this any of you, to justify God in your damnation; to own that ye are by nature children of wrath, and that God may justly cut you off, though ye never actually had offended him in all your life. If ye were ever truly convicted, if your hearts were ever truly cut, if self were truly taken out of you, ye will be made to see and feel this. And if ye have never felt the weight of original sin, do not call yourselves Christians. I am verily persuaded original sin is the greatest burden of a true convert; this even grieves the regenerate soul, the sanctified soul. The indwelling of sin in the heart is the burden of a converted person; it is the burden of a true Christian; he continually cries out, *O! Who will deliver me from this body of death*, this indwelling corruption in my heart; this is that which disturbs a poor soul most. And, therefore, if ye never felt this inward corruption, if ye never saw that God might justly curse you for it; indeed, my dear friends, ye may speak peace to your heart, but I fear, nay, I know, there is no true peace.

Further, before ye can speak peace to your hearts, ye must not only be troubled for the sins of your life, the sin of your nature, but likewise for the sins of your best duties and performances. When a poor soul is somewhat awakened by the terrors of the Lord, then the poor creature, being born under the covenant of works, flies directly to a covenant of works again. And as Adam and Eve hid themselves among the trees of the garden, and sewed fig leaves together to cover their nakedness; so the poor sinner when awakened, flies to his duties, and to his performances, to hide himself from God; and goes to patch up a righteousness of his own: Says he, I will be mighty good now; I will

reform, I will do all I can, and then certainly Jesus Christ will have mercy on me. But before ye can speak peace to your heart, ye must be brought to see that God may damn you for the best prayer ye ever put up in all your life: Ye must be brought to see all your duties, all your righteousness, as the prophet elegantly expresses it, put them altogether, are so far from recommending you to God, are so far from being any motive and inducement to God to have mercy on your poor souls, that ye will see them to be filthy rags, a menstruous cloath; that God hates them, and cannot away with them, if ye bring them to him in order to recommend you to his favour. My dear friends, what is there in our performances to recommend us unto God; our persons are in an un sanctified state by nature, we deserve to be damned ten thousand times over; and what must our performances be? We can do no good thing by nature; *they that are in the flesh cannot please God.* Ye may do things materially good; but ye cannot do a thing formally and rightly good, because nature cannot act above itself. It is impossible that a man that is unconverted can act for the glory of God; he cannot do any thing in faith, for *whatsoever is not of faith is sin.* After we are renewed, yet we are renewed but in part; indwelling sin continues in us; there is a mixture of corruption in every one of our duties: So that after we are converted, were Jesus Christ only to accept us according to our works, our works would damn us; for we cannot put up a prayer but it is far from that perfection which the moral law requireth. I do not know what ye may think; but I can say that I cannot pray but I sin; I cannot preach to you or any others but I sin; I can do nothing without sin; and, as one expresses it, my repentance wants to be repented of, and my tears to be washed in the precious blood of my dear Redeemer; our best duties are as so many splendid sins. Before ye can speak

peace to your hearts, ye must not only be sick of your original and actual sins; but ye must be made sick of your righteousness; of all your duties and performances. There must be a deep conviction before ye can be brought out of your self-righteousness; it is the last idol that is taken out of our heart, the pride of our heart will not let us submit to the righteousness of Jesus Christ. But if ye never felt that ye had no righteousness of your own; if ye never felt the deficiency of your own righteousness, ye can never come to Jesus Christ. There are a great many now that may say, Well, we believe all this: But there is a great difference betwixt talking and feeling. Did ye ever feel the want of a dear Redeemer? Did ye ever feel the want of Jesus Christ upon the account of the deficiency of your own righteousness? And can ye now say from your heart, Lord, thou mayest justly damn me for the best duties that ever I did perform: If ye are not thus brought out of self, ye may speak peace to yourselves, but yet there is no peace.

But then before ye can speak peace to your souls there is one particular sin ye must be greatly troubled for; and yet I fear there are few of you think what it is: it is the reigning, the damning sin of the Christian world; and yet the Christian world seldom or never think of it; and pray what is that? It is what most of you think ye are not guilty of, and that is the sin of unbelief. Before we can speak peace to your heart, ye must be troubled for the unbelief of your heart. But can it be supposed, that any of you are unbelievers here in this church-yard, that are born in Scotland, in a reformed country, that go to church every Sabbath? Can any of you that receive the sacrament once a year? (O that it were administered oftner.) Can it be supposed that you that had tokens for the sacrament; that you that keep up family-prayer, that any of you do not believe on the Lord Jesus

Christ? I appeal to your own hearts, if ye would not think me uncharitable, if I doubted whether any of you believed in Christ: And yet I fear, upon examination, we should find that most of you have not so much faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the devil himself. I am persuaded the devil believes more of the Bible than most of us do; he believes the divinity of Jesus Christ, that is more than many that call themselves Christians do; nay, he believes and trembles, and that is more than thousands amongst us do. My friends, we mistake an historical faith for a true faith wrought in the heart by the Spirit of God. Ye fancy ye believe, because ye believe there is such a book we call the Bible, because ye go to church; all this ye may do, and have no true faith in Christ. Merely to believe there was once such a person as Christ, merely to believe there is such a book called the Bible, will do you no good, more than to believe there was such a man as Cesar or Alexander the Great. The Bible is a sacred depositary; what thanks have we to give to God for these lively oracles! But yet we may have these, and not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. My dear friends, there must be a principle wrought in the heart by the Spirit of the living God. Did I ask you how long it is since ye believed in Jesus Christ, I suppose most of you would tell me, ye believed in Jesus Christ as long as ever ye remember; ye never did misbelieve: Then ye could not give me a better proof that ye never yet believed in Jesus Christ, unless ye were sanctified early from the womb; for they that believe in Christ, know there was a time when they did not believe in Jesus Christ. You say you love God with all your heart, soul, and strength: If I were to ask you, how long it is since ye loved God, ye would say, As long as ye can remember ye never hated God; ye know no time when there was enmity in your heart against God: Then unless ye were sanctified very

early, ye never loved God in your life. My dear friends, I am more particular in this, because it is a most deceitful delusion, whereby so many people are carried away, that they believe already. Therefore it is remarkable of Mr. Marshall giving account of his experiences, he had been working for life, he had ranged all his sins under the ten commandments, and then coming to a minister, asked him the reason why he could not get peace: The minister looked to the catalogue, "Away, says he, I do not find one word of the sin of unbelief in all your catalogue." It is the peculiar work of the Spirit of God to convince us of our unbelief, that we have got no faith. Says Jesus Christ, *I will send the Comforter; and when he is come, he will reprove the world of the sin of unbelief: Of sin,* says Christ, *because they believe not on me.* Now, my dear friends, did God ever shew you that ye had no faith? Was you ever made to bewail a hard heart of unbelief? Was it ever the language of your heart, Lord, give me faith? Lord, enable me to lay hold on thee? Lord, enable me to call thee my Lord and my God? Did Jesus Christ ever convince you in this manner? Did he ever convince you of your inability to close with Christ, and made you cry out to God to give you faith? If not, do not speak peace to your heart: May the Lord awaken you, and give you true solid peace before ye go hence and be no more.

Once more then, before ye can speak peace to your heart, ye must not only be convinced of your actual and original sin, the sin of your own righteousness, the sin of unbelief; but ye must be enabled to lay hold upon the perfect righteousness, the all-sufficient righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ; ye must lay hold by faith on the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and then ye shall have peace. *Come,* says Jesus, *unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* This speaks

encouragement to all that are weary and heavy laden; but the promise of rest is made to them only upon their coming, and believing, and taking him to be their God and their all. Before ever we can have peace with God, we must be justified by faith through our Lord Jesus Christ; we must be enabled to apply Christ to our heart; we must have Christ brought home to our soul, so as his righteousness may be made our righteousness, so as his merits may be imputed to our souls. My dear friends, were ye ever married to Jesus Christ? Did Jesus Christ ever give himself to you? Did ye ever close with Christ by a lively faith, so as to feel Christ in your heart, so as to hear him speaking peace to your souls? Did peace ever flow in upon your heart like a river? Did ye ever feel that peace that Christ spoke to his disciples? I pray God he may come, and speak peace to you. These things ye must experience. I am now talking of the invisible realities of another world, of inward religion, of the work of God upon a poor sinner's heart: I am now talking of a matter of great importance; my dear hearers, ye are all concerned in it; your souls are concerned in it; your eternal salvation is concerned in it. You may all be at peace, but perhaps the devil has lulled you asleep into a carnal lethargy and security, and will endeavour to keep you there, till he get you to hell, and there ye will be awakened; but it will be dreadful to be awakened, and find yourselves so fearfully mistaken, when the great gulf is fixed, when ye will be calling to all eternity for a drop of water to cool your tongue, and shall not obtain it.

Give me leave then to address myself to several sorts of persons; and O may God, of his infinite mercy, bless the application. There are some of you perhaps can say, through grace we can go alongst with you; blessed be God we have been convinced of our actual sins; we have been convinced of ori-

ginal sin; we have been convinced of self-righteousness; we have felt the bitterness of unbelief, and, through grace, we have closed with Jesus Christ; we can speak peace to our hearts, because God hath spoken peace to us. Can ye say so? Then I will salute you as the angels did the women the first day of the week, All hail, fear not ye, my dear brethren; ye are happy souls; ye may lie down and be at peace indeed, for God hath given you peace; ye may be content under all the dispensations of providence; for nothing can happen to you now, but what shall be the effect of God's love to your soul: Ye need not fear what fightings may be without, seeing there is peace within. Have ye closed with Christ? Is God your friend? Is Christ your friend? Then look up with comfort; all is yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's; every thing shall work together for your good; the very hairs of your head are numbered; he that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of God's eye. But then, my dear friends, take care of resting on your first conversion: ye that are young believers in Christ, ye should be looking out for fresh discoveries of the Lord Jesus Christ every moment: ye must not build upon your past experiences; ye must not build upon a work within you, but always come out of yourselves to the righteousness of Jesus Christ without you: ye must be always coming as poor sinners to draw water out of the wells of salvation; ye must be forgetting the things that are behind, and be continually pressing forward to the things that are before. My dear friends, ye must keep up a tender close walk with the Lord Jesus Christ. Many of us lose our peace by our untender walk. Some thing or other gets in betwixt Christ and us, and we fall into darkness: Something or other steals our heart from God, and this grieves the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost leaves us to ourselves. Let me, therefore, exhort you that have got peace with God, to take

care that ye do not lose this peace. It is true, if ye are once in Christ, ye cannot finally fall from God; *there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*; but if ye cannot fall finally, ye may fall souly, and may go with broken bones all your days. Take care of backsliding, for Jesus Christ's sake: Do not grieve the Holy Ghost; ye may never recover your comfort while ye live. O take care of going a-gadding and wandering from God, after ye have closed with Jesus Christ. My dear friends, I have paid dear for backsliding. Our hearts are so cursedly wicked, that if ye take not care, if ye do not keep up a constant watch, your wicked hearts will deceive you, and draw you aside. It will be sad to be under the scourge of a correcting father; witness the visitation of Job, David, and other saints in scripture. Let me, therefore, exhort you that have got peace to keep a close walk with Christ. I am grieved with the loose walk of those that are Christians, that have had discoveries of Jesus Christ; there is so little difference betwixt them and other people, that I scarce know which is the true Christian. Christians are afraid to speak for God; they run down with the stream; if they come into worldly company, they will talk of the world, as if they were in their element: This ye would not do when ye had the first discoveries of Christ's love; ye could talk then of Christ's love for ever, when the candle of the Lord shined upon your soul. The time has been when ye had something to say for your dear Lord; but now ye can go into company, and hear others speaking about the world bold enough, and ye are afraid of being laughed at, if ye speak for Jesus Christ. A great many people have grown conformists now in the worst sense of the word; they will cry out against the ceremonies of the church, as they may justly do: But then ye are mighty fond of ceremonies in your behaviour; ye will conform to the world, which is a great deal worse; many

will stay till the devil bring up new fashions. Take care then not to be conform to the world: What have Christians to do with the world? Christians should be singularly good, bold for their Lord, that all that are with you may take notice that ye have been with Jesus. I would exhort you to come to a settlement in Jesus Christ, so as to have a continual abiding of God in your heart. We go a building on our faith of adherence, and lose our comfort; but we should be growing up to a faith of assurance, to know that we are God's, and so walk in the comfort of the Holy Ghost and be edified. Jesus Christ is now much wounded in the house of his friends. Excuse me in being particular; for, my friends, it grieves me more that Jesus Christ should be wounded by his friends as by his enemies. We cannot expect any thing else from Deists; but for such as have felt his power to fall away, for them not to walk agreeably to the vocation wherewith they are called, by these means we bring our Lord's religion into contempt, to be a by-word among the Heathens. For Christ's sake, if ye know Christ, keep close by him; if God hath spoken peace, O keep that peace, by looking up to Jesus Christ every moment. Such as have got peace with God, if ye are under trials, fear not, all things shall work for your good; if ye are under temptations, fear not; if he has spoken peace to your heart, all these things shall be for your good.

But what shall I say to you that have got no peace with God; and these are perhaps the most of this congregation; it makes me weep to hear of it. Most of you, if you examine your heart, must confess that God never yet spoke peace to you; ye are children of the devil if Christ is not in you; if God has not spoken peace to your heart, poor soul, what a cursed condition are you in? I would not be in your case for ten thousand thousand worlds! Why? Ye are just hanging over hell.

What peace can ye have when God is your enemy, when the wrath of God is abiding upon your poor soul? Awake then, ye that are sleeping in a false peace; awake, ye careless professors, ye hypocrites that go to church, receive the sacrament, read your Bibles, and never felt the power of God upon your heart; ye that are formal professors, ye that are baptized heathens, awake, awake, and do not rest on a false bottom. Blame me not for addressing myself to you; indeed it is out of love to your soul. I see ye are lingering in your Sodom, and wanting to stay there: But I come to you as the angel did to Lot, to take you by the hand. Come away, my dear brethren, fly, fly, fly for your lives to Jesus Christ: fly to a bleeding God; fly to a throne of grace; and beg of God to break your heart; beg of God to convince you of your actual sins; beg of God to convince you of your original sin; beg of God to convince you of your self-righteousness; beg of God to give you faith, and to enable you to close with Jesus Christ. O ye that are secure, I must be a son of thunder to you; and O that God may awaken you, though it be with thunder. It is out of love indeed that I speak to you. I know, by sad experience, what it is to be lulled asleep with a false peace. Long was I lulled asleep; long did I think myself a Christian, when I knew nothing of the Lord Jesus Christ. I went perhaps further than many of you do; I used to fast twice a week; I used to pray some times nine times a day; I used to receive the sacrament constantly every Lord's day; and yet I knew nothing of Jesus Christ in my heart. I knew not I must be a new creature: I knew nothing of inward religion in my soul. And perhaps many of you may be deceived, as I a poor creature was; and therefore it is out of love to you indeed that I speak to you. O, if ye do not take care, a form of religion will destroy your soul: ye will rest in it, and will not

come to Jesus Christ at all: Whereas these things are only the means, and not the end of religion; Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to all that believe. O then awake, ye that are settled on your lees; awake, ye church professors; awake, ye that have got a name to live, that are rich and think ye want nothing, not considering that ye are poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel you to come and buy of Jesus Christ gold, white raiment and eye-salve. But I hope there are some that are a little wounded. I hope God does not intend to let me preach in vain. I hope God will reach some of your precious souls, and awaken some of you out of your carnal security. I hope there are some that are willing to come to Christ, and beginning to think that they have been building upon a false foundation. Perhaps the devil may strike in, and may bid you despair of mercy; but fear not: what I have been speaking to you is only out of love to you, is only to awaken you, and let you see your danger. If any of you are willing to be reconciled to God, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is willing to be reconciled to you. O then, though ye have no peace as yet, come away to Jesus Christ; he is our peace; he is our peace-maker; he has made peace betwixt God and offending man. Would you have peace with God? Away then to God through Jesus Christ, who has purchased peace. The Lord Jesus hath shed his heart's blood for this; he died for this; he rose again for this; he ascended into the highest heavens, and is now interceding at the right hand of God. Perhaps ye think there will be no peace for you: Why so? Because ye are sinners; because ye have crucified Christ, ye have put him to open shame, ye have trampled under foot the blood of the Son of God. What of all this? Yet there is peace for you. Pray what did Jesus Christ say to his disciples, when he came to them the first day of the week? The

first word he said was, *Peace be unto you.* He showed them his hands and his feet, and said, *Peace be unto you.* It is as much as if he had said, fear not, my disciples; see my hands and my feet, how they have been pierced for your sake; therefore fear not. How did Christ speak to his disciples, *Go tell my brethren, and tell* broken-hearted Peter in particular, that Christ is risen; that he is ascended unto his father and your father, to his God and your God. And after Christ rose from the dead, he came preaching peace with an olive-branch of peace in his mouth, as Noah's dove, *My peace I leave with you.* Who were they? They were the enemies of Christ as well as we; they were deniers of Christ once as well as we. Perhaps some of you have backsliden and lost your peace, and ye think ye deserve no peace; and no more ye do: But then God will heal your backslidings, he will love you freely. As for you that are wounded, if you are made willing to come to Christ, come away. Perhaps some of you want to dress yourselves in your duties, that are but rotten rags. No, ye had better come naked as ye are; for ye must throw aside your rags, and come in your blood. Some of you may say, we would come, but we have got a hard heart: But ye will never get it soft till ye come to Christ; he will take away the heart of stone, and give you a heart of flesh; he will speak peace to your soul: Though ye have betrayed him, yet he will be your peace. Shall I prevail upon any of you this morning to come to Jesus Christ. There is a great multitude of souls here; how shortly must ye all die, and go to judgment; even before night, or to-morrow's night, some of you may be buried in this church-yard. And how will ye do if ye be not at peace with God! if the Lord Jesus Christ has not spoken peace to your heart. If God speak not peace to you here, ye will be damned for ever. I must not flatter you; my dear friends, I will deal sincerely with your souls.

Some of you may think I carry things too far: But indeed when ye come to judgment, ye will find this true, either to your eternal damnation or comfort. May God influence your hearts to come to him. I am not willing to go away without persuading you. I cannot be persuaded but God may make use of me as a mean of persuading some of you to come to the Lord Jesus Christ. O did you but feel the peace which they have that love the Lord Jesus Christ; *Great peace have they, says the Psalmist, that love thy law, nothing shall offend them.* But there is no peace to the wicked. I know what it is to live a life of sin. I was obliged to sin to this conviction. And I am sure this is the way many of you take; if ye get into company, ye drive off conviction. But ye had better go to the bottom at once; it must be done, your wound must be searched, or ye must be damned. If it were a matter of indifferency, I would not speak one word about it: But ye will be damned without Christ; he is the way, he is the truth, and the life. I cannot think you should go to hell without Christ. How can ye dwell with everlasting burnings? How can ye abide the thought of living with the devil for ever? Is it not better to have some soul-trouble here, than to be sent to hell by Jesus Christ hereafter? What is hell but to be absent from Christ? If there were no other hell, that would be hell enough. It will be hell to be tormented with the devil for ever. Get acquaintance with God then, and be at peace. I beseech you, as a poor worthless ambassador of Jesus Christ, that ye would be reconciled to him. My business this morning, the first day of the week, is to tell you that Christ is willing to be reconciled to you. Will any of you be reconciled to Jesus Christ? Then, he will forgive you all your sins; he will blot out all your transgressions. But if ye will go on and rebel against Christ, and stab him daily; if ye will go on and abuse Jesus Christ,

the wrath of God ye must expect will fall upon you. God will not be mocked; that which a man soweth, that shall he also reap. And if ye will not be at peace with God, God will not be at peace with you. Who can stand before God when he is angry. It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God. When the people came to apprehend Christ, they fell to the ground when Jesus said, I am he. And if they could not bear the sight of Christ when cloathed with the rags of mortality, how will they bear the sight of him when he is on his Father's throne? Methinks I see the poor wretches dragged out of their graves by the devil, methinks I see them trembling, crying out to the hills and rocks to cover them. But the devil will say, Come, I will take you away; and then they will stand trembling before the judgment-seat of Christ. They shall appear before him to see him once, and hear him pronounce that irrevocable sentence, *Depart from me, ye cursed.* Methinks I hear the poor creatures saying, Lord, if we must be damned, let some angel pronounce the sentence. No, the God of love, Jesus Christ will pronounce it. Will ye not believe this? Do not think I am talking at random, but agreeable to the scriptures of truth. If ye do, then shew yourselves men, and this morning go away with full resolution, in the strength of God, to cleave to Christ. And may ye have no rest in your soul till ye rest in Jesus Christ. I could still go on, for it is sweet to talk of Christ. Do ye not long for the time when ye shall have newbodies, when they shall be immortal, and made like Christ's glorious body, and then they will talk of Jesus Christ for evermore. But it is time perhaps for you to go and prepare for your respective worship, and I would not hinder any of you. My design is to bring poor sinners to Jesus Christ. O that God may bring some of you to himself. May the Lord Jesus now dismiss you with his blessing;

and may the dear Redeemer convince you that are unawakened, and turn the wicked from the evil of their way. And may the love of God that passeth all understanding fill your heart. Grant this, O Father, for Christ's sake, to whom with thee and the blessed Spirit, be all honour and glory, now and for evermore. *Amen.*

S E R M O N XV.

The wise and foolish VIRGINS.

MATTHEW XXV. 13.

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of man cometh.

THE apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews, informs us, that *it is appointed for all men once to die; after that is the judgment.* And I think, if any consideration be sufficient to awaken a sleeping drowsy world, it must be this, that there will be a day wherein these heavens shall be wrapt up like a scroll, this element melt with fervent heat, the earth and all things therein be burnt up, and every soul, of every nation and language, summoned to appear before the dreadful tribunal of the righteous Judge of quick and dead, to receive rewards and punishments, according to the deeds done in their bodies. The great apostle just mentioned, when brought before Felix, could think of no better means to convert that sinful man, than to reason of temperance, righteousness, and more especially of a judgment to come. The first might in some measure affect, but I am persuaded, it was the last consideration, a judgment to come, that

made him to tremble: And so bad as the world is now grown, yet there are few have their consciences so far seared, as to deny that there will be a reckoning hereafter. The promiscuous dispensations of providence in this life, wherein we see good men afflicted, destitute, tormented, and the wicked permitted triumphantly to ride over their heads, has been always looked upon as an indisputable argument, by the generality of men, that there will be a day in which God will judge the world in righteousness, and administer equity unto his people. Some indeed are so bold as to deny it, while they are engaged in the pursuit of the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; but follow them to their death-beds, ask them, when their souls are ready to launch into eternity, what they then think of a judgment to come? and they will tell you, they dare not give their consciences the lie any longer. They feel a fearful looking-for of judgment, and fiery indignation in their hearts. Since then these things are so, does it not highly concern each of us, my brethren, before we come on a bed of sickness, seriously to examine how the account stands between God and our souls, and how it will fare with us in that day? As for the openly profane, the drunkard, the whoremonger, the adulterer, and such like, there is no doubt of what will become of them; without repentance, they shall never enter into the kingdom of God and his Christ: No; their damnation slumbereth not; a burning fiery Tophet, kindled by the fury of God's eternal wrath, is prepared for their reception, wherein they must suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. Nor is there the least doubt of the state of true believers. For though they are despised and rejected of natural men, yet being born again of God, they are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. They have the earnest of the promised inheritance in their hearts, and are assured, that a new and living way is made

open for them, into the holy of holies, by the blood of Jesus Christ, into which an abundant entrance shall be administered to them at the great day of account. The only question is, what will become of the *almost Christian*, one that is content to go, as he thinks, in a middle way to heaven, without being profane on the one hand, or, as he falsely imagines, righteous over-much on the other? Many there are in every congregation, and consequently some here present, of this stamp. And what is worst of all, it is more easy to convince the most notorious publicans and sinners of their being out of a state of salvation, than any of these. Notwithstanding if Jesus Christ may be our Judge, they shall as certainly be rejected and disowned by him at the last day, as though they lived in open defiance of all his laws.

For what says our Lord in the parable of which the words of the text are a conclusion, and which I intend to make the subject of my present discourse. *Then, at the day of judgment, which he had been discoursing of in the foregoing, and prosecutes in this chapter, shall the kingdom of heaven, (the state of professors in the gospel-church) be likened unto ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.* In which words, is a manifest allusion to a custom prevailing in our Lord's time among the Jews, at marriage-solemnities, which were generally at night, and at which it was customary for the persons of the bride-chamber to go out in procession, with many lights, to meet the bridegroom.

By the bridegroom, you are here to understand Jesus Christ. The church, that is, true believers, are his spouse; he is united to them by one spirit, even in this life; but the solemnizing of these sacred nuptials is reserved till the day of judgment, when he shall come to take them home to himself, and present them before men and angels, as his

purchase to his Father, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. By the ten virgins we are to understand the professors of Christianity in general. Are all called virgins, because all are called to be saints. Whosoever names the name of Christ is obliged by that very profession to depart from all iniquity. But the pure and chaste in heart, are the only persons that will be so blessed as to see God. As Christ was born of a virgin, so he can dwell in none but virgin souls, made pure and holy by the cohabitation of his holy Spirit. What says the apostle? *All are not Israelites that are of Israel,* all are not Christians that are called after the name of Christ: No, says our Lord, in the 2d verse, *Five of those virgins were wise, true believers, and five were foolish, formal hypocrites.* But why are five said to be wise, and the other five foolish? Hear what our Lord says in the following verses; *They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them; But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.* They that were foolish took their lamps of an outward profession. They would go to church, say over several manuals of prayers, come perhaps even into a field to hear a sermon, give at a collection, and receive the sacrament constantly, nay, oftener than once a month. But then here lay the mistake; they had no oil in their lamps, no principle of grace, no living faith in their hearts, without which, though we should give all our goods to feed the poor, and our bodies to be burned, it would profit us nothing. In short, they were exact, nay, perhaps superstitious bigots as to the form, but all the while they were strangers to, and, in effect, denied the power of godliness in their hearts. They would go to church, but at the same time, think it no harm to go to a ball or an assembly, notwithstanding they promised at their baptism, to renounce the pomps and vanities of this wicked world. They were so exceedingly fearful of being

righteous overmuch, that they would even persecute those that were truly devout, if they attempted to go a step farther than themselves. In one word, they never effectually felt the power of the world to come. They thought they might be Christians without so much inward feeling, and therefore, notwithstanding their high pretensions, had only a name to live.

And now, sirs, let me pause a while, and in the name of God, whom I endeavour to serve in the gospel of his dear Son, give me leave to ask one question. Whilst I have been drawing, though in miniature, the character of these foolish virgins, have not many of your consciences made the application, and with a small, still, though articulate voice, said, thou man, thou woman, art one of those foolish virgins, for thy sentiments and practice agree thereto? Stille not, but rather encourage these convictions; and who knows, but that that Lord who is rich in mercy to all that call upon him faithfully, may so work upon you even by this foolishness of preaching, as to make you wise virgins before you return home?

What they were you shall know immediately: *But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.* Observe, *the wise*, the true believers, had their lamps as well as the foolish virgins; for Christianity does not require us to cast off all outward forms; we may use forms, and yet not be formal: For instance, it is possible to worship God in a set form of prayer, and yet worship him in Spirit and in truth. And therefore, brethren, let us not judge one another: The wise virgins had their lamps; herein then did not lie the difference between them and the foolish, that one worshipped God with a form, and the other did not: No: as the Pharisee and Publican went up to the temple to pray, so these wise and foolish virgins might go to the same place of worship, and sit under the same ministry; but then the

wife took oil in their vessels with their lamps; they kept up the form, but did not rest in it; their words in prayer were the language of their hearts, and they were no strangers to inward feelings; they had savingly tasted the good word of life, and felt, or had an experimental knowledge of the power of the world to come; they were not afraid of searching doctrines, nor affronted when ministers told them they by nature deserved to be damned; they were not self-righteous, but were willing that Jesus Christ should have all the glory of their salvation; they were convinced that the merits of Jesus Christ were to be apprehended only by faith; but yet were they as careful to maintain good works, as tho' they were to be justified by them: In short, their obedience flowed from love and gratitude, and was chearful, constant, uniform, universal, like that obedience which the holy angels pay our Father in heaven.

Here then let me exhort you to pause again; and if any of you can faithfully apply these characters to your hearts, give God the glory, and take the comfort to your own souls; you are not false but true believers. Jesus Christ has been made of God to you wisdom, even that wisdom, whereby you shall be made wise unto salvation. God sees a difference between you and foolish virgins, if natural men will not. You need not be uneasy, though one chance and fate in this life may happen to you both. I say, one chance and fate; for verse 5. *while the bridegroom tarried*, in the space of time which passeth between our Lord's ascension and his coming again to judgment, *they all slumbered and slept*. The wise as well as foolish died, for dust we are, and to dust we must return. It is no reflection at all upon the divine goodness, that believers, as well as hypocrites, must pass through the valley of the shadow of death; for Christ has taken away the sting of death, so that we need fear no evil. It is to them a passage to everlasting life: Death is on-

ly terrible to those who have no hope, because they live without faith, and therefore without God in the world. Whosoever there are amongst you, that have received the first fruits of the Spirit, I am persuaded you are ready to cry out, we would not live here always; we long to be dissolved, that we may be with Jesus Christ; and though worms must destroy our bodies as well as others, yet we are content, being assured that our Redeemer liveth, that he will stand at the latter days upon the earth, and that in our flesh we shall see God.

But it is not so with hypocrites and unbelievers beyond the grave; for what says our Lord? *And at midnight: Observe, at midnight, when all was hushed and quiet, and no one dreaming of any such thing, a cry was made; the voice of the archangel and the trump of God was heard sounding this general alarm; to things in heaven, to things in earth, and to things in the waters under the earth, Behold! mark how this awful summons is ushered in with the word Behold, to engage our attention? Behold the bridegroom cometh!* even Jesus Christ, the desire of nations, the bridegroom of his spouse the church: Because he tarried for a while to exercise the faith of saints, and give sinners space to repent, scoffers were apt to cry out, *Where is the promise of his coming? But the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as these men account slackness.* For behold, he that was to come, now cometh, and will not tarry any longer: He cometh to be glorified in his saints, and to take vengeance on them that know not God, and have not obeyed his gospel: He cometh not as a poor despised Galilean; not to be laid in a stinking manger; not to be despised and rejected of men; not to be blind-folded, spit upon, and buffeted; not to be nailed to an accursed tree; he cometh not as the Son of man, but as he really was, the eternal Son of the eternal God: He cometh riding on the

wings of the wind, in the glory of the Father and his holy angels, and to be had in everlasting reverence of all that shall be round about him. Go ye forth to meet him; arise, ye dead, ye foolish, as well as wise virgins, arise and come to judgment. Multitudes, no doubt, that hear this awakening cry, would rejoice if the rocks might fall on, and the hills cover them from the presence of the Lamb: What would they give, if as they lived as beasts, they might now die like the beasts that perish? How would they rejoice, if those same excuses, which they made on this side eternity, for not attending on holy ordinances, would serve to keep them from appearing before the heavenly bridegroom! But as Adam, notwithstanding his fig-leaves, and the trees of the garden, could not hide himself from God, when arrested with an *Adam, where art thou?* So now the decree is gone forth, and the trump of God has given its last sound; all tongues, people, nations, and languages, both wise and foolish virgins, must come into his presence, and bow beneath his footstool; even Pontius Pilate, Annas and Caiaphas; even the proud persecuting high-priests and Pharisees of this generation, must appear before him: For says our Lord, *Then (when the cry was made, behold the bridegroom cometh!)* in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the graves were opened, the sea gave up its dead, and *all those virgins, both wise and foolish, arose and trimmed their lamps,* or endeavoured to put themselves in a proper posture to meet the bridegroom.

But how may we imagine the foolish virgins were surprised, when, notwithstanding their high thoughts and proud imaginations of their security, they now find themselves wholly naked, and void of that inward holiness and purity of heart, without which no man living at that day shall comfortably meet the Lord. I doubt not but many of these foolish virgins, whilst in this world, were

cloathed in purple and fine linen; fared sumptuously every day, and disdained to set the wise virgins, some of whom might be as poor as Lazarus, even with the dogs of their flock. These were looked upon by them as enthusiasts and madmen, as persons that were righteous over-much, and who intended to turn the world upside down: But now death hath opened their eyes, and convinced them to their eternal sorrow, that he is not a true Christian, who is only one outwardly. Now they find, (though, alas! too late) they, and not the wise virgins, had been beside themselves. Now their proud hearts are made to stoop, their lofty looks are brought low; and as Dives entreated that Lazarus might dip the tip of his finger in water, and be sent to cool his tongue, so these foolish virgins, these formal hypocrites, are obliged to turn beggars to those whom they once despised: *Give us of your oil; O! impart to us a little of that grace and holy spirit, for the insinuating on which we fools accounted your lives madness; for, alas! our lamps are gone out; we had only the form of godliness; we were whited sepulchres; we were heart-hypocrites; we contented ourselves with desiring to be good; and though confident of salvation whilst we lived, yet our hope is entirely gone, now God has entirely taken away our souls; give us therefore, O! give us, though we once despised you, give us of your oil, for our lamps of an outward profession, and transient convictions, are quite gone out. Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith the Lord.* My brethren in Christ, hear what the foolish say to the wise virgins, and learn in patience to possess your souls. If you are true followers of the lowly Jesus, I am persuaded you have your names cast out, and all manner of evil spoken falsely against you for his name's sake. For no one ever did, or will live godly in Christ Jesus, without suffering persecution; nay, I doubt not but your chief foes are those of your own household: Tell me, do not your car-

nal relations and friends vex your tender souls day by day, in bidding you spare yourselves, and take heed lest you go too far. And as you passed along to come and hear the word of God, have you not heard many a Pharisee cry out, here comes another troop of his followers! Brethren, be not surprised, Christ's servants were always the world's fools: You know it hated him before it hated you. Rejoice and be exceeding glad. Yet a little while, and behold the bridegroom cometh, and then shall you hear these formal scoffing Pharisees saying unto you, *Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out.* When you are reviled, revile not again: when you suffer, threaten not; commit your souls into the hands of him that judgeth righteously: for behold the day cometh, when the children of God shall speak for themselves.

The wise virgins, in the parable, no-doubt endured the same cruel mockings as you may do; but as the lamb before the shearers is dumb, so in this life opened they not their mouths; but now we find they can give their enemies an answer: *Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.* These words are not to be understood as tho' they were spoken in an insulting manner; for true charity teaches us to use the worst of sinners, and our most bitter enemies, with the meekness and gentleness of Christ: Though Dives was in hell, yet Abraham does not say, Thou villain, but only, *Son, remember:* And I am persuaded, had it been in the power of these wise virgins, they would have dealt with the foolish virgins, as, God knows, I would willingly deal with my most inveterate enemies, not only give them of their oil, but also exalt them to the right-hand of God. It was not then for want of love, but the fear of wanting a sufficiency for themselves, that made them return this answer, *Not so, lest there be not enough for us*

and you: For they that have most grace, have none to spare; none but self-righteous, foolish virgins think they are good enough, or have already attained. Those who are truly wise are always most distrustful of themselves, pressing forwards to the things that are before, and think it well if after they have done all, they can make their calling and election sure. *Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.* These words indeed seem to be spoken in a triumphant, but certainly they were uttered in the most compassionate manner; *Go ye to them that sell, and buy for yourselves:* Unhappy virgins! you accounted our lives folly; whilst with you in the body, how often have you condemned us for our zeal in running to hear the word of God, and looked upon us as enthusiasts, for talking and affirming, that we must be led by the Spirit, and walk by the Spirit, and feel the Spirit of God witnessing with our spirits, that we are his children? But now you would be glad to be partakers of this privilege, but it is not ours to give. You contented yourselves with seeking, when you should have been striving to enter in at the strait gate. And now go to them that sell, if you can, *and buy for yourselves.*

And what say you to this, ye foolish-formal professors? for I doubt not but curiosity and novelty hath brought many such, even to this despised place, to hear a sermon. Can you hear this reply to the foolish virgins, and yet not tremble? Why yet a little while, and thus it shall be done to you. Rejoice and bolster yourselves up in your duties and forms; endeavour to cover your nakedness with the fig-leaves of an outward profession and a legal righteousness, and despise the true servants of Christ as much as you please, yet know, that all your hopes will fail you when God brings you into judgment. For not he who commendeth

himself is justified, but he whom the Lord commendeth.

But to return; we do not hear of any reply the foolish virgins make: No, their consciences condemned them; like the person without a wedding garment, they are struck dumb, and are now filled with anxious thoughts how they shall buy oil, that they may lift up their heads before the bridegroom. *But whilst they went to buy,* ver. 10. whilst they were thinking what they should do, the bridegroom, the Lord Jesus, the king, the husband of his spouse the church, cometh, attended with thousands and twenty times ten thousands of saints and angels, publicly to count up his jewels; and they that were ready, the wise virgins who had oil in their lamps, and were sealed by his Spirit to the day of redemption, these having on the wedding garment of an imputed righteousness, and a new nature, went in with him to the marriage.

But who can express the transports that these wise virgins felt, when they were thus admitted, in holy triumph, into the presence and full enjoyment of him, whom their souls hungered and thirsted after. No doubt they had tasted of his love, and by faith had often fed on him in their hearts, when sitting down to commemorate his last supper here on earth; But how full may we think their hearts and tongues were of his praises, when they see themselves seated together to eat bread in his heavenly kingdom. And what was best of all, the door was shut, and shut them in, to enjoy the ever blessed God, and the company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, without interruption for evermore. I say, without interruption; for in this life, their eyes often gushed out with water, because men kept not God's law; and they could never come to appear before the Lord, or to hear his word, but Satan and his emissaries would come also to disturb them: But now the door

s shut, now there is a perfect communion of saints, which they in vain longed for in this lower world; now tares no longer grow up with the wheat; not one single hypocrite, or unbeliever, can screen himself amongst them. Now *the wicked cease from troubling*, and now their weary souls enjoy an everlasting rest.

Once more, O believers, let me exhort you in patience to possess your souls. God, if he has freely justified you by faith in his Son, and given you his Spirit, has sealed you to be his, and has secured you, as surely as he secured Noah, when he locked him in the ark. But though heirs of God, and joint heirs of Christ, and neither men nor devils can pluck you out of your heavenly Father's hands, yet you must be tossed about with manifold temptations; however lift up your heads, the day of your perfect, compleat redemption draweth nigh. Behold the bridegroom cometh to take you to himself; the door shall be shut, and you shall be forever with the Lord.

But I even tremble to tell you, O nominal Christians! that the door will be shut, I mean the door of mercy, never, never to be opened to give you admission, though ye should continue knocking to all eternity. For thus speaks our Lord, verse 11. *Afterwards*, after those that were ready went in, and the door was shut; after they had, to their sorrow, found that no oil was to be bought, no grace to be procured, *came also the other virgins*; and as Esau, after Jacob had gotten the blessing, cried with an exceeding bitter cry, *Bless me, even me also, O my father*; so they came saying, *Lord, Lord, open to us*. Observe the importunity of these foolish virgins, implied in the words *Lord, Lord*. Whilst in the body, I suppose they only read, did not pray over their prayers. If you now tell them, they should pray without ceasing, they should pray from their hearts, and feel the want of what they

prayed for; they would answer, they could not tell what you mean by inward feelings; that God did not require us to be always on our knees; but if a man did justly, and loved mercy, and did as the church-forms required him, it was as much as the Lord required at his hands.

I fear, sirs, too many among us are of this mind: Nay, I fear there are many so polite, so void of the love of God, as to think it too great a piece of self-denial, to rise early to offer up a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. If any such, by the good providence of God, are brought hither this morning, I beseech you to consider your ways, and remember, if you are not awakened out of your spiritual lethargy, and live a life of prayer here, you shall but in vain cry out with the foolish virgins, *Lord, Lord, open unto us*, hereafter. Observe farther, the impudence, as well as importunity of these other virgins; *Lord, Lord*, say they, as though they were intimately acquainted with the holy Jesus. Like numbers among us, who because they go to church, repeat their creeds, and receive the blessed sacrament, think they have a right to call Jesus their Saviour, and dare call God their Father, when they put up the Lord's prayer. But Jesus is not your Saviour. The devil, not God, is your father, unless your hearts are purified by faith, and you are born again from above. It is not merely being baptized by water, but being born again of the Holy Ghost, that must qualify you for salvation; and it will do you no service at the great day, to say unto Christ, *Lord, my name is in the register of such and such a parish*. I am persuaded, the foolish virgins could say this and more. But what answer did the blessed Jesus make? He answered and said, verse 12. *Verily, I say unto you*: He puts the word *verily*, to assure them he was in earnest. *I say unto you*, I who am truth itself, I whom you have owned in

words, but in works denied, *verily, I say unto you, I know you not.* These words must not be understood literally; for whatever Arians and Socinians may say to the contrary, yet we affirm, that Jesus Christ is God, God blessed for ever, and therefore knoweth all things. He saw Nathaniel, when under the fig-tree. He sees and is now looking down from heaven, his dwelling-place, upon us, to see how we behave in these fields. Brethren, I know nothing of the thoughts and intents of your hearts, in coming hither; but Jesus Christ knows who come like new-born babes, desirous to be fed with the sincere milk of the word; and he knows who came to hear what the babler says, and to run away with part of a broken sentence, that they may have whereof they may ridicule or accuse him. This expression then, *I know you not*, must not be understood literally; no, it implies a knowledge of approbation; as though Christ had said, *You call me Lord, Lord, but you have not done the things that I have said*; you desire me to open the door, but how can you come in hither, not having on a wedding-garment? Alas, you are naked! Where is my outward righteousness imputed to you? Where is my inherent righteousness wrought in you? Where is my divine image stamped upon your souls? How dare you call me Lord, Lord, when you have not received the Holy Ghost, whereby I seal all that are truly mine? *Verily, I know you not; depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*

And now, *he that hath ears to hear, let him hear* what manner of persons these were, whom Jesus Christ dismissed with this answer. Remember, I intreat you remember, they are not sent away for being fornicators, swearers, sabbath-breakers, or prodigals. No, in all probability, as I observed before, they were, touching the outward observances of the moral law, blameless; they were constant

as to the form of religion; and if they did no good yet no one could say, they did any one any harm. The only thing for which they were condemned, and eternally banished from the presence of the Lord, (for so much is implied in *I know you not*) was this, they had no oil in their lamps, no principle of a true living faith and holiness in their hearts. And if persons may go to church, receive the sacrament, lead honest moral lives, and yet be sent to hell at the last day, as they certainly will be if they advance no farther, where wilt thou, O drunkard? Where wilt thou, O swearer? Where wilt thou, O sabbath-breaker? Where wilt thou that deniest divine revelation, and even the form of godliness? Where will you and such like sinners appear? I know very well. You must appear before the dreadful tribunal of Jesus Christ: However you may, like Felix, put off the prosecution of your convictions, yet you, as well as others, must arise after death, and appear in judgment; you will then find, to your eternal sorrow, what I just hinted at in the beginning of this discourse, that your damnation slumbereth not; Sin has blinded your hearts, and hardened your foreheads now, but yet a little while, and our Lord will ease him of his adversaries. Methinks, by faith, I see the heavens opened, and the holy Jesus coming with his face brighter than ten thousand suns, darting fury upon you from his eyes! Methinks I see you rising from your graves, trembling and astonished, and crying out, who can abide this day of his coming!

And now what inference shall I draw from what has been delivered? Our Lord, in the words of the text, has drawn one for me; *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.*

Watch; that is, be upon your guard, and keep your graces in continual exercise: For as when we are commanded to watch unto prayer, it signifies that we should continue instant in that duty; so

when we are required to watch in general, it means that we should put on the whole armour of God, and live every day as though it was our last.

And O that the Lord may now enable me to lift up my voice like a trumpet! For had I a thousand tongues, or could I speak so loud that the whole world might hear me, I could not sound a more useful alarm than that which is contained in the words of the text. *Watch therefore*, my brethren, I beseech you by the mercies of God in Christ Jesus, *Watch*; be upon your guard; *Awake*, ye that *sleep in the dust*; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. Perhaps to-day, perhaps this midnight, the cry may be made: For in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the trump is to sound. However, supposing the final day of judgment may yet be a great way off, the day of death is certainly near at hand. For what is our life? It is but a vapour, but a span long, soon passed away, and we are gone. Blessed be God, we are all here well; but who, out of this great multitude, dare say, I shall go home to my house in safety? Who knows, but whilst I am speaking, God may commission his ministring spirits immediately to call some of you away by a sudden stroke, to give an account with what attention you have heard this sermon.

You know, my brethren, some such instances we have lately had. And what angel or spirit hath assured us, that some of you shall not be the next? *Watch therefore*, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man will come: And it is chiefly for this reason, that God has hidden the day of our deaths from us. For since I know not but I may die to-morrow, why, O my soul, (may each of us say) wilt thou not watch to-day? Since I know not but I may die the next moment, why wilt thou not prepare for dying this?

Many such reflections as these, my brethren,

crowd in upon my mind. At present, blessed be the Lord, who delights to magnify his strength in a poor worm's weakness, I am at a stand, not so much about what I shall say, as what I shall leave unsaid. My belly, like Elihu's, is, as it were, full of new wines; out of the abundance of my heart my mouth speaketh. The seeing so great a multitude standing before me; a sense of the infinite majesty of that God in whose name I preach, and before whom I as well as you must appear, to give an account; and the uncertainty there is whether I shall live another day, to speak to you any more: these considerations, especially the presence of God, which I now feel upon my soul, furnishes me with so much matter, that I scarce know where to begin, or where to end my application. However, for method's sake, by the divine assistance, I will branch it into three particulars.

And *first*, I would remind you that are notoriously ungodly, of what our Lord says in the text; For though I have said your damnation slumbereth not, whilst you continue in an impenitent state; yet that was only to set you upon your watch, to convince you of your danger, and excite you to cry out, *What shall we do to be saved?* I appeal to all that hear me, whether I have said the door of mercy should be shut against you, if you believe on Jesus Christ: No, if you are the chief of sinners; if you are murderers of fathers, and murders of mothers; if you are emphatically the dung and offscouring of all things; yet if you believe on Jesus Christ, and cry unto him with the same faith as the expiring thief, *Lord, remember me, now thou art in thy kingdom*: I will pawn my eternal salvation upon it, if he does not shortly translate you to his heavenly paradise. Wonder not at my speaking with so much assurance; for I know *it is a faithful and true saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save* (all truly affected and believing)

sinners: Nay, so great is his love, that I am persuaded, was it necessary, he would come again into the world, and die a second time for them on the cross. But, blessed be God, when our Lord bowed down his head, and gave up the ghost, our redemption was finished. It is not our sins, but our want of a lively faith in his blood, that will prove our condemnation: If you draw near to him by faith, though you are the worst of sinners, yet he will not say unto you, *Verily I know you not.* No, a door of mercy shall be opened to you. Look then, look then, by an eye of faith, to that God-man whom ye have pierced. Behold him bleeding, panting, dying upon the cross, with arms stretched out ready to embrace you all. Hark! how he groans! See how all nature is in an agony! The rocks rend, the graves open; the sun withdraws its light, ashamed as it were to see the God of nature suffer; and all this to usher in man's great redemption. Nay, the holy Jesus, in the very bitter agonies and pangs of death, prays for his very murderers; *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* If then you have crucified the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame, yet do not despair, only believe, and even this shall be forgiven. You have read, at least you have heard, no doubt, how three thousand were converted at St. Peter's preaching one single sermon, after our Lord's ascension into heaven; and many of the crucifiers of the Lord of glory undoubtedly were amongst them; and why should you despair? For *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.* The Holy Ghost shall be sent down on you, as well as on them, if you do but believe; for Christ ascended up on high to receive this gift even for the vilest of men. Come then, all ye that are weary and heavy laden with a sense of your sins, lay hold on Christ by faith, and he will give you rest; for salvation is the free gift of God to all them that believe. And though you may think this too good news to be true, yet I

speak the truth in Christ, I lie not, this is the gospel, this is the glad tidings which we are commissioned to preach to every creature. *Be not faithless then, but believing.* Let not the devil lead you captive at his will any longer; for all the wages he gives his servants is death, death often in this life, death everlasting in the next: But the free gift of God is eternal life to all that believe in Jesus Christ. Pharisees are and will be offended at my coming here, and offering you salvation on such cheap terms: But the more they bid me hold my peace, the more will I cry out and proclaim to convicted sinners, that Jesus, David's son according to the flesh, but David's Lord as he was God, will have mercy upon all that by a living faith truly turn to him. If this is to be vile, I pray God, I may be more vile. If they will not let me preach Christ crucified, and offer salvation to poor sinners in a church, I will preach him in the lanes, streets, highways and hedges; and nothing pleases me better, than to think I am now in one of the devil's strongest holds. Surely the Lord has not sent me and all you hither for nothing; no, blessed be God, *the fields are white ready unto harvest*, and many souls I hope will be gathered into his heavenly garner. It is true, it is the midnight of the church, especially the poor church of England; but God has lately sent forth his servants to cry, *Behold the bridegroom cometh*: I beseech you, O sinners, hearken unto the voice! Let me espouse you by faith to my dear master; and henceforward watch and pray, that you may be ready to go forth to meet him.

Secondly, I would apply myself to those amongst you, that are not openly profane, but by depending on a formal round of duties, deceive your own souls, and are only foolish virgins.

But I must speak to your conviction, rather than your comfort. My dear brethren, do not deceive your own souls. You have heard how far the

foolish virgins went, and yet were answered with *Verily I know you not*: The reason is, because none but such who have a living faith in Jesus Christ, and are truly born again, can possibly enter into the kingdom of heaven. You may, perhaps, live honest and outwardly moral lives, but if you depend on that morality, or join your works with your faith, in order to justify you before God, you have no lot or share in Christ's redemption; For what is this but to deny the Lord that has bought you? What is this but making yourselves your own Saviours? taking the crown from Jesus Christ, and putting it on your own heads? The crime of the devil, some have supposed, consisted in this, that he would not bow to Jesus Christ, when the Father commanded all the angels to worship him; and what do you less? You will not own and submit to his righteousness; and though you pretend to worship him with your lips, yet your hearts are far from him; besides you, in effect, deny the operations of his blessed Spirit, you mistake common for effectual grace; you hope to be saved, because you have good desires, and a few short convictions; and what is this, but to give God, his word, and all his saints, the lie? A Jew, a Turk, has equally as good grounds whereon to build his hopes of salvation. Need I not then to cry out to you, ye foolish virgins, watch. Beg of God to convince you of your self-righteousness, and the secret unbelief of your hearts; or otherwise whensoever the cry shall be made, *Behold the bridegroom cometh*, you will find yourselves utterly unprepared to go forth to meet him: You may cry *Lord, Lord: but the answer will be, Verily I know you not.*

Thirdly, I would speak a word or two by way of exhortation to those who are wise virgins, and are assured that they have on a wedding-garment. That there are many such amongst you, who by grace have renounced your own righteousness, and know

that the righteousness of the Lord Jesus is imputed to you, I make no doubt. God has his secret ones in the worst of times; and I am persuaded he has not let so loud a gospel-cry to be made amongst his people, as of late has been heard, for nothing. No, I am confident, the Holy Ghost has been given to many at the preaching of faith, and has powerfully fallen upon many, whilst they have been hearing the word. You are now then no longer foolish, but wise virgins; notwithstanding, I beseech you also to suffer the word of exhortation; for wise virgins are too apt, whilst the bridegroom tarries, to slumber and sleep. Watch therefore, my dear brethren, watch and pray, at this time especially; for perhaps a time of suffering is at hand. The ark of the Lord begins already to be driven into the wilderness. Be ye therefore upon your watch, and still persevere in following your Lord, even without the camp, bearing his reproach: the cry that has been lately made has awakened the devil and his servants; they begin to rage horribly; and well they may; for I hope their kingdom is in danger. Watch therefore, for if we are not always upon our guard, a time of trial may overtake us unawares; and, instead of owning, like Peter we may be tempted to deny our master. Set death and eternity often before you. Look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith, and consider how little a while it will be, ere he comes to judgment; and then our reproach shall be wiped away; the accusers of us and our brethren shall be cast down, and we all shall be lodged in heaven for ever, with our dear Lord Jesus.

Lastly, What I say unto you, I say unto all, *Watch:* High and low, rich and poor, young and old, one with another, of whatever sect or denomination, for I regard not that, I beseech you, by the mercies of Jesus, to be upon your guard: Fly, fly to Jesus Christ that heavenly bridegroom:

Behold he desires to take you to himself, miserable, poor, blind and naked as you are; he is willing to clothe you with his everlasting righteousness, and make you partakers of that glory, which he enjoyed with the Father before the world began. Do not turn a deaf ear to me; do not reject the message on account of the meanness of the messenger. I am a child; but the Lord has chosen me, that the glory might be all his own. Had he sent to invite you by a learned rabbi, you might have been tempted to think that the man had done something; but now God has sent a child, that the excellency of the power may be seen not to be of man, but of God. Let the learned Pharisees then despise my youth: I care not how vile I appear in the sight of such men; I glory in it. And I am persuaded, if any of you should be married to Christ by this preaching, you will have no reason to repent, when you come to heaven, that God sent a child to cry, *Behold the bridegroom cometh!* O my brethren, the thought of being instrumental in bringing one of you to glory, fills me with fresh zeal. Once more, I intreat you, *Watch, watch and pray*; for the Lord Jesus will receive all that call upon him faithfully. Let that cry, *Behold the bridegroom cometh*, be continually sounding in your ears; and begin now to live, as though you were assured, this night you were to go forth to meet him. I could say more, but the other business and duties of the day oblige me to stop. May the Lord give you all an hearing ear, and an obedient heart, and so closely unite you to himself by one spirit, that when he shall come in terrible majesty, to judge mankind, you may be found having on a wedding-garment, and ready to go in with him to the marriage.

Grant this, O Father, for thy dear Son's sake, Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen! and Amen!

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